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The betrayal of the Charter

Shirley Hazzard

EVAN LUARD

A History of the United Nations: Volume 1, The Years of Western Domination, 1945-1955 404pp, Macmillan, £25. 0 353 24389 7

Eugenio Montale characterized the public events of our era as "fit for history, unfit for memory". In this first volume of his *History of the United Nations*, Evan Luard confirms the schism with an analysis of the abstraction called "international affairs" that ignores history's sources in human responsibility. The method undermines not only a vital area where impersonality is incompatible with any approach to truth, but also necessarily reduces confidence in sections where the story seems more candidly presented.

Luard's volume, dealing with the years 1945-1955, is textbook, rather than historical narrative. The author reviews the UN's founding, and proceeds through chapters individually devoted to the international crises of the postwar decade, discussing the UN's performance in each case. He touches on disarmament, the UN Secretariat, and UN membership disputes; and closes by summarizing the views developed throughout. The book's theme - conveyed in its subtitle, "The Years of Western Domination" - is a mighty one, still to be fully revealed and frankly examined.

Always within the convention of UN thought and expression, the successive chapters on Azerbaijan and the Levant, Greece, Indonesia, Korea, Palestine, Kashmir, and Guatemala are superior. Despite a battery of "conflict situations" and the occasional "hosted" conference, the text is less jargon-ridden than in most such studies; and the conclusions, in these instances, generally less indulgent. Luard moves beyond the simplistic formula that UN failure is "all the fault of governments". At his best, in these chapters, he examines the influence of particular national policies, actions and errors on a larger outcome.

During the decade covered by Luard's book, and far beyond it, the "western domination" of the United Nations was overwhelmingly directed by the United States, abetted - eagerly, reluctantly, or apathetically - by America's European, hemispheric,

and Asian allies and dependents. The general disposition of the American public and of US administrations, Democratic and Republican, towards the new UN was a confusion of unconscious ascendancy, enthusiasm, sentimentality, cynicism, villainy, and ignorance: that is, of immaturity made dangerous by power. The almost unbounded power of the United States at the United Nations was in the first place financial, in a world-wide as well as a parochial budgetary sense; it was numerical, consistently commanding the majority in UN councils; it was psychological, in that the UN was sited in New York and cast in an American mould; and it was potentially moral - the United States then being regarded as the stable, prosperous, beneficent centre of democratic energies. Whatever the capacity of the Soviet Union to make a nuisance of itself in UN assemblies, the Russians held none of those cards. Little virtue was in any case expected from that quarter. The advantages and opportunities were almost exclusively American; and thus too the responsibility.

Looking back on this period, Senator Fulbright was to write in 1972, in an exposition unmentioned by Luard: "Having controlled the United Nations for many years as tightly and as easily as a big-city boss controls his party machine, we had got used to the idea that the United Nations was a place where we could work our will." As Luard himself concludes: "No doubt, if they had been in a majority, the communist states would have behaved in much the same way. The conduct of the West... was none the less an abuse of power. And it was an abuse that those same [Western] members were likely to regret more than most when the balance of power changed again and a different majority assumed control of the organization. There has been rage; but not, as yet, regret."

Luard repeatedly illustrates the deficiencies of UN thought and processes - the inordinate lack of reason, courage, imagination, and knowledge; the inability to weigh alternatives or compromise; the trivial level of negotiation in the wings, and the specious bombast on stage. He demolishes another UN platitude - that the UN is a place where "governments at least keep talking" - by reminding us that its "propaganda-laden, declamatory environment" has

provided a forum for rampant nationalism and Cold War ideologies; for freeing nations into proclaimed attitudes, or compelling them to take sides. (It should also be remembered that nations have negotiated for many centuries, and have even on occasions made peace: lack of the present version of a United Nations would not have precluded international contact, and would frequently have simplified it.) In few instances is Luard able to report that the UN "acted as it in other cases often failed to do". His tale is predominantly of negotiations that "never really reached the heart of the matter", or of "dismal failure"; or of exasperating lost chances, as in Palestine; and of outright iniquity, as in UN complicity in the 1954 invasion of Guatemala. He concludes that the UN failed throughout the first decade in its root purpose of conciliation less from the overpowering nature of events or from innate limitation than from gratuitous insecurities and self-inflicted wounds: "It failed [in this purpose] because it never even attempted to achieve it."

In all this Luard appears forthright. (Even so, attacks of endemic cynicism cause him to appear on two sides of some issue which his own exposition has made clearly single.) He is evidently sincere, in these chapters, in wishing to determine the origins of UN performance and the manner in which these neutralized the organization's potentiality. Thus far, by United Nations standards, the book is lucid, useful, and enquiring.

By United Nations standards only, Luard's investigations fall within what Vico called *coscienza*, or matter informed by man's intimate knowledge of his kind. Any disagreement over them can be comfortably adduced and absorbed within the UN frame. They will cause none of that private anguish and public penetration through which men acquire self-knowledge and institutions are re-born. Few of the laymen who constitute the entire world beyond UN walls will read this volume before it joins its many blue-jacketed brethren decomposing on academic shelves. In reviving the ancient categories of sacred and profane history, UN chroniclers have clung exclusively to the sacred side; the institution they depict is drained, as often they themselves are, of any suggestion that human characteristics are at work there. Luard's book, scarcely less than the rest, recalls that

blood of Dorothea Brooke's Mr Casaubon which, when examined under a magnifying-glass, "was all semicolons and parentheses". This essential flaw has led Luard to shirk the central episode of his story.

The United Nations confraternity has notably exerted itself to evade public accountability: the UN barons - governmental, Secretariat, or satellite (an agglomeration now encompassing several hundred thousand persons and consuming many billions of dollars annually) shall be tried only by other barons. To date, this demand, backed by a huge, costly, and often unethical public relations apparatus, has been remarkably acceded to. An indifferent or complaisant press has done little to discover or convey the dimensions of UN infirmity; organized supporters have been predominantly content to buff the UN's public image; academe has solemnly pondered UN phantasmata; proposals for reforms have been localized, and disregarded; most criticism has been discounted as politically impelled; publications on UN matters have been written by insiders and reviewed by associates; and a view has been nurtured, not remote from moral blackmail, that it would be indecent to subject the organization to adult standards. Like the funeral director in *The Loved One*, the UN is "kinda holy". Some of this is well intended, but it does nothing to arouse the public to the realities of an appalling institution, nor to prepare for reconstitution of the internationalist concept in an intelligible form. One of Luard's most interesting passages deals with ideas - unexamined or discarded - for a different realization of the United Nations. Elements of these might well now make part of a larger reconsideration.

The episode Luard is unable to confront is one in which the screen of UN abstraction fell away and actual beings became answerable for betrayals of public trust and private decency; and for annihilation at the organization itself of UN Charter principle and an inestimable power for good.

At the UN's founding, a strong effort - reflected in the Charter - was made to establish the UN Secretariat as a hair-shirt for governments: an independent international civil service, headed by a vigorous Secretary-General, which would impartially provide exposure and propose

correctives to maintain the precepts to which governments nominally subscribed at San Francisco. Above all, the cumulative value and standing of such a body would have engaged public opinion as a deterrent against incipient conflicts. The experience of the League of Nations had made clear that machinery of international conciliation would be little more than a hodgepodge of national interests - as embodied in the present United Nations - without some such central organism whose loyalties were consistently to the world's citizenry rather than to governmental caprice.

Luard stresses this original resolve, invoking the "awful warnings" of the League. He goes on, however, to relate - as it were, incidentally - that when the big powers at once sought to violate these Charter provisions by installing their own candidates in senior UN posts, the first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, having been "strictly enjoined to take no account of political factors in making [such] appointments", decided, however (as have all his successors) that discretion was here the better part of valour. We are thus weirdly encouraged to pass over Lie's instant and fatal destruction of this Charter imperative as a show of "discretion". Correspondingly, having emphasized that the UN Preparatory Commission "firmly turned down a proposal that the consent of an individual's government would be required before he was appointed to the Secretariat, a proposal that had been strongly supported by the Soviet Union", Luard barely mentions the decisive overthrow, by the United States, of that fundamental safeguard as well.

The subjection of the United Nations Secretariat was thus assured at birth. A surreptitious understanding between Lie and the United States authorities that the international civil service should conform to American directives was sufficiently apparent by March 1947 to provoke a mass staff demonstration, at Lake Success, against the Secretary-General. In 1949 Lie entered into a written secret agreement with the State Department whereby American incumbents or applicants at the UN were "screened" without their knowledge, by US agents. From Luard we merely learn that "the State Department agreed to examine US records", with no indication of the clandestine and illicit nature of the transaction nor of its

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incalculable significance. Nor does Luard inform us that "US nationals" then comprised two-thirds of the UN Headquarters staff - a preponderance that lasted throughout the organization's first decade, with Americans occupying most of the key posts. The United States government was therefore secretly controlling, in a period of extreme and unbridled isolationism in America's history, the selection, retention, and promotion of the majority of UN staff, with a heavy additional influence over employees from other Western bloc countries.

Lie's secret agreement and its grim exercise were revealed, in the depths of the McCarthyist period, to Senator Pat McCarran's internal security subcommittee, by State Department officials anxious to vindicate themselves as zealous of the witchhunt. It need hardly be said that exposure of an analogous conspiracy between the Soviet government and the UN Secretariat would probably have caused the collapse of the organization. Despite the many engrossing documents available on this theme, Luard relies almost exclusively on the demonstrably untruthful account given in Trygve Lie's memoirs. The result is a deplorably inadequate and erroneous treatment of the episode in which "western domination" of the United Nations is traumatically exemplified.

Excluded also is any reference to the struggle waged by UN staff representatives to defend the Charter - a stand that brought them dismissal regardless of nationality. When the appeals of the first wave of the dismissed were upheld by an international tribunal, Lie refused reinstatement and obtained new regulations to permit dismissal without cause. Luard appears to accept Lie's demerited claim that UN principles - and any semblance of justice - should be suspended for "the host country". He fails entirely to grapple with Lie's character - that of a weak, bullying, untruthful and ignorant man whose self-dramatization and occasional hysteria invalidated even his rational gestures. (Luard does not, however, go as far as Lord Gladwyn who, while leaving us in no doubt of Lie's vulgarity, informs us in his memoirs that Lie "was a good Secretary-General, in the sense that he was genuinely impartial and something of a father-figure".)

As the documents reveal, a number of UN senior officials were deeply implicated in these illegalities. The most influential member of the UN administration in those years was not Lie but the administrative and financial chief, Byron Price, an American mentioned just once in Luard's volume. As the United States' secret agent in the UN Secretariat, Price operated what the State Department called "the cover plan" for Lie's "highly confidential" violations, waging war against resistors à l'entrance.

In 1952 - the year of the Eisenhower-Stevenson contest for the Presidency - the McCarthyites extended their attack to encompass, as a potential "risk", every UN employee. Lie was himself called to appear before a US grand jury; he declined, with apologies. The scramble for safety was conspicuous on high ground, where UN leaders not actively abetting the "inquisitors" maintained a terrified silence. The Secretariat was transfixed for over a year by what Lie was later to call "Purgatory" and "Greek tragedy", and by its accompanying headlines. Under an American, Abraham Feller, the UN legal division concocted grotesque "charges" against the dismissed, while the organization's legal representative, another American, who accompanied the UN victims to their nightmare interrogations by "McCarthyite" commissions as supposed-defender of their international rights, fervently thanked the persecutors for their "courtesies" and "complete fairness", and asked that the record "show that in no case did the Secretary-General interpose any objection to a question presented to any witness in the United Nations". Not one of the victims was charged with an offence. Luard, like many another, appears quite indifferent to the contingent destruction of profession, livelihood and reputation, and does not concern himself with the inanity of the accusations. In November 1953, as a direct outcome of the drama, Lie was obliged to offer his resignation. Three days later, his legal chief, Abraham

Feller, committed suicide - driven to his death, as both his widow and Lie affirmed at the time, by the same events.

The indefatigable Lie used his remaining months to install a branch of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in the UN building, to "facilitate" American interrogation and fingerprinting of UN staff - again without audible protest from UN leaders. (Luard, in his few lines of censure, tells us that this took place "despite the protests of very many UN officials, including many Americans"; whereas Lie, on whose account he otherwise relies, claims that "A great many more American members of the staff likewise welcomed it.") Any UN American declining to submit to this new outrage was - as recorded in the appeals - threatened by the UN administration, reported to the inquisitors, and dismissed. The FBI also used their UN offices to spy on and interrogate UN employees of other nationalities.

With the new year of 1953, a permanent "security clearance" of US employees at the UN was imposed by Presidential order. It remains today. The floodgates were open to political appointments. Henceforth, the "highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity" stipulated in the Charter would be the UN internal surveys confirm - infiltrate the UN only through lapse of administrative vigilance; and find the going rough there. It was not - as Trygve Lie himself admitted - "subversion" that had been feared in the international civil service; but moral courage and independent mind.

At the time of Feller's suicide, Telford Taylor - one of several distinguished jurists who represented the dismissed UN employees - gave his view, in a letter to the *New York Times*, that "Abe Feller was the victim not of his own fears but of the fears of others that kept them silent . . . What voice has been raised to say that the United Nations is the creature and vehicle of all the nations . . . that the notion of political conformity within this staff can, and surely will, be applied to the grave disadvantage of the democratic cause?"

Most of the information given here, and all of its larger meaning, is absent from Luard's cursory account. There is no indication that he has consulted the indispensable papers on these events. Still less has it occurred to him - nor indeed to any of the toilers in the UN industry - to seek out survivors of the

Manoeuvres in the mausoleum

Ian Duffield

J. M. LEE and MARTIN PETTER
The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy
285pp. Temple Smith, £18.95
0 85117 2210

In recent years, scholars have taken an increasing interest in the problems which the Second World War posed for Britain as an imperial and colonial power. Unlike some of their predecessors, such as W. R. Louis and Christopher Thorne, J. M. Lee and Martin Petter have eschewed the grand canvas, and instead have chosen to examine the response of the Colonial Office itself to the problems, and demands that arose out of the war. Given the vast wartime expansion in files within the Colonial Office, as in all other Departments, it is not surprising that their study, although modest in length, is very dense in texture, and may prove a little indigestible to non-specialists.

Nevertheless, as well as grappling with inter and intra-Departmental affairs, this book raises the important issue of how far the Colonial Office could hope to be in control of events, both present and anticipated - or at least to influence them - under the peculiarly difficult circumstances of the times. The Colonial Office had always been rather a Cinderella Department in Whitehall, lacking political clout, to say the least. It was ill-placed to maintain control over policy and policy-making. The point for the Office came in 1942, after the disasters in Malaya and Singapore, and with the fust from Britain's new American allies about colonial

purges or review their archives. (That such persons, and their counsel, are willing to discuss the experience was recently confirmed by me when providing material requested for a proposed American television programme on the theme.)

Luard's wishful thinking persists into the Hammarskjöld era. Reporting that the anxieties of a "thankful" staff "began slowly to subside", without connecting this abatement to mass dismissals and intimidation, Luard claims that Hammarskjöld "demanded" the removal of FBI agents from UN premises in November 1953 - that is, eight months after assuming office. He neglects to point out that the FBI's UN dossiers were by then complete. (The staff was in fact still timidly deploring the FBI's presence in January 1954.) Hammarskjöld refused reinstatement to a fresh batch of the vindicated, and concurred in another such dismissal. His administrative attitudes were as antagonistic to the staff as Lie's, and in their way almost as destructive. (Those who examine Luard's notes will find a single schizophrenic reference to "great disquiet among part of the UN staff" at this time.) Sustained attempts by UN staff representatives to adhere to the Charter were over - only resurfacing thirty years later in the thwarted efforts of Lowell Flanders. Apart from the hopelessly compromised Price, the UN leaders most active in the witchhunt remained among Hammarskjöld's closest associates. The fatal system of national "clearances" was retained, and wrought havoc.

Absence of a competent life of Hammarskjöld is a surprising gap in contemporary biography. Serious work may exist - in Sweden or elsewhere - that I am unaware of. The minor contributions that I have seen are uninformative. Brian Urquhart's lifeless compendium sheds no light on the man; and its weight of official evidence, though oppressive, is reverentially selective on specific issues. While persons survive from Hammarskjöld's youth, the subject invites an accomplished, objective writer familiar with Hammarskjöld's native tongue and with the cultural ambience that nurtured this strange figure.

The legacies of that period have been exclusively evil - the more so for being denied the health of recognition and redress. Subservience to governments has since obsessed and dominated a UN service entirely separated from its original Charter obligations. In the words of

Solzhenitsyn's Nobel address, "It is not a United Nations but a United Governments organization . . . which delivers the peoples of the world up to the designs of governments." UN apostasy in human rights has immeasurably contributed to escalating violence by refusing any effective hearing to the grievances of populations, minorities, and individuals. While UN leaders claim to be busy in these matters "behind the scenes", sporadic backstage illumination more usually reveals the pattern of inhumanity and collusion set by Lie: "Why, man," as Hamlet remarked of two UN archetypes, "They did make love to this employment."

The paradox embodied in the UN leadership's early assault on its own proclaimed principles was institutionalized. Conceived as a nucleus of standards, the UN system wilfully embraced malpractice, greed and disorder. When Luard solemnly writes of a UN quest for "general administrators of a high calibre", "if possible with two or three languages", it will scarcely be grasped by his readers that the senior levels of the UN service have consistently received the unwanted of national administrations. (By 1971, an internal study was reporting that, of senior staff, "more than 25 per cent seem never to have attended an establishment of higher education.") Of Americans constituting the staff majority in the first decade, almost none in intermediate and senior ranks had any acquaintance with a second language, which was enjoined only on clerical levels; many had never previously travelled beyond their country's borders. Similarly, Luard's stately references to UN aid programmes bear little relation to the mindless shambles formidably documented in the UN's "Capacity Study" prepared by Robert Jackson in 1969; or to the gignonic disparity between the quality and performance of the UN hypertrophy on the one hand, and its opportunities and material resources on the other.

What poignantly emerges from Luard's early pages is the amount of hopeful public attention the United Nations commanded in its first years. Luard shows how "the moral authority wielded" at that time favourably influenced governmental conduct by the volume of world opinion which it could mobilize - adding that the organization "would clearly be able to secure law and order only by maximizing its influence of this kind". That supreme asset was cast away by governments and Secretariat

alike, briefly reviving in the UN initiatives of Hammarskjöld the habit developed in circles of condemnation and equivocal Luard too takes "faith", and consequent commitment, among the world's persons who originally supported internationalist concepts exposed to microles, but assumed as the effort would be made at the UN conciliation. An entire generation now grown up for whom the UN as it is regarded all, is as dishevelled, ridiculous, and boring as the responsibility rests with the organization.

These public "limbs" habitually countered, in UN circles, a self-serving UN doctrine of "reality". Listening to UN officials, one might imagine not merely men and women had never individuals, collectively shown mercy, but moral courage, but that these were a veritable offence to international understanding. Luard is not a necessary stimulant to a better endeavour, and his concepts as the abolition of the assertion of religious freedom have been pursued without a sense of purpose. And while institution unwilling even to let the gestures made in support of stated principles deserve to be

largely on official sources, consequence, few people emerge, although Sir Arnold (who ferociously feared all encroachment on the law) departments of which he was in charge), and Sydney Caine, one of the most forceful proponents of centralized economic planning into focus as men of stature and very different ways. Caine forced the pace of economic change within official circles, but as a transpirer, a major force for change, and Sydney Caine, one of the most forceful proponents of centralized economic planning into focus as men of stature and very different ways. Caine forced the pace of economic change within official circles, but as a transpirer, a major force for change, and Sydney Caine, one of the most forceful proponents of centralized economic planning into focus as men of stature and very different ways. 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rather than seem cowards. But perhaps acceptance of what we cannot alter is the braver course. As Aristotle puts it: "A man . . . is not brave . . . if knowing the magnitude of the danger, he faces it through passion - as the Celts take up their arms to go to meet the waves."

One might be forgiven for wishing that Shakespeare had expressed himself more clearly at this point - to the extent even of mentioning those darn Celts. No doubt the actor who played Marcellus failed to remember the speech because he could never understand it. And what is the contemporary actor to do to get the meaning across? One of the myths by which our classical theatre lives is that the true meaning of a play must be what comes across in performance, and yet the experience of reading this edition is enough to convince one that the actor performing Hamlet can only put over a fraction of the significance of certain lines.

This is not to say that we are better off reading *Hamlet* in the study than seeing it on the stage. Many of the academic problems associated with *Hamlet* simply do not arise on stage. For instance, if you only ever saw decent productions of the play, you would never know that there is a "problem" as to why the king does not react to the dumb-show. One way or another, the problem is always solved before the audience ever gets to the theatre: the tension of waiting for the king to crack is the great source of the interest of the scene. Yet I must say I often wish people in the theatre were less prone to despise an academic or "literary" approach and that academics were slower to turn their backs on the actor whose job it is to communicate the maximum available meaning of a text which would certainly die if its audience were only to be drawn from the academic community.

When we read *Hamlet* in privacy we create every part out of a part of ourselves, like an only child playing with a Pollocks toy theatre. And in these private performances we can be much more magisterial than any director. We rush through the duller bits. We allow our favourite characters to repeat their lines as often as they

wish. We rant, whisper, salivate, weep, roar - we do all the things which we would criticize in performance. If we want, we may even interpolate into these performances a juicy bit from one of Jenkins's footnotes. The cuts we make are nobody's business.

But when we go to the theatre, the luxury of all these decisions is taken out of our hands. We will never begin to enjoy the performances unless we are prepared to accept: here is a Hamlet not played by me. Worse still, here is a Hamlet who has never heard of me. Perhaps, at a pinch, he may understand my indecisiveness, but can he get anywhere near my nobility of spirit? It is hard for the academically-minded to enjoy themselves at the theatre because they feel most acutely the gross intrusion of Other People into roles that they have always occupied. Theatre, they have climbed on tiptoe into those legendary attic, the Bodleian or the Folger, where they discover that they may always play undisturbed. It is a wonderful life as long as you don't like Other People. It is the business of scholarship to prove that Other People are wrong.

As to the theatrical dislike of academe, we may be certain that its history is long. If the actor who played Marcellus had been asked to review this edition he would certainly have had a great deal to say in defence of the "Bad" Quarto. "Of course," he would have said, "Will was a genius - a genius, but he had simply no idea of how much an audience could take. We never understood all those soliloquies. Never! That's why I cut them down to size. The point of theatre, my boy, is bums on seats. Bums on seats. And by Jove when we toured with OI we had bums on seats wherever we went."

Although it would be rare today to hear an actor praised for not bothering too much with the detailed meaning of a text, one has only to look back to a Tynan review of Olivier to find great acting analysed in precisely this way. Olivier's gift, according to Tynan, was for pointing up a few significant words and getting as quickly and subtly as possible through the intervening passages. Today, it is common for

critics to single out "intelligent" performances for a kind of useful praise. The actor who you will read, seemed to be explaining the text rather than acting it, and it is generally felt that explanation is an inappropriate activity in the theatre. If we are realistic we have to admit that between the scholar's ideal reading and the great performance there is a difference both of quantity and of kind. A great Hamlet on stage may well fail to put across the true meaning of the "To be" speech. His greatness will lie elsewhere. It will derive from a consistent impression he gives of a character's development, and from the success with which he embodies his individuality in the part. This is what scholarship might call an "accretion". Certainly it is rare to find in this edition any positive contribution made by an actor to the understanding of *Hamlet*. Theatre critics feature even less in the notes - a fact which does not surprise me, since theatre criticism in general has found it possible to rub along quite nicely with a bare minimum of original ideas.

But if our classical theatre is to improve, it is not to stagnate, it seems to me vital to abandon the notion that performance is everything and that scholarship is merely an accretion. There are directors who will make it their business to go through all the major scholarship on a play but most of them will take care to conceal their learning from the public. In the presentation of programmes, one very rarely feels that any weight has been given to the dramaturgical side of a production. Indeed there is no dramaturge at the RSC and very little evidence of one at the National. Nobody likes to accept that an intelligent audience emerging from a play might have found the performance completely satisfactory but might still have questions about how certain decisions were reached, questions which can appropriately be answered through means of documentation.

The Arden edition makes no attempt to do a stage history of *Hamlet*, but it contains a wealth of useful suggestions which will be of interest to any modern director. The personality of its editor is one which prefers,

wherever possible, to come to a firm conclusion on a much-debated point. Yet I do not find any of these interpretations dogmatic or restricting. They are based on a profound feeling for idiom, and we have to accept with *Hamlet* that a great proportion of its idiom has been lost or submerged. This is not something that the theatre audience wants to believe about Shakespeare; they demand immediate access via his works to the mystery of the universe, and they have been encouraged in the belief that this is possible by centuries of popular bardolatry. Not along ago, for instance, the National Theatre mounted a recital of the whole of Shakespeare's sonnets. I wrote something to the effect that it was impossible to understand the sonnets when delivered all in one go. This provoked a member of the audience into a great rage - she wrote complaining that if I did not understand them I should have read them first. Among the National audience during this recital there was a most powerful sense of this prevailing fiction: we were all supposed to be taking it all in, and at the end of it all we could be as pleased with ourselves as with the performance.

For a masterpiece to come alive for us, and for it to come alive continually, it must be made strange. This is the generally given and accepted notion of theatrical aesthetics. And one of the strangest approaches to a masterpiece is through an edition of this kind. Reading it is like coming upon a familiar city from a completely new road and observing its buildings and surrounding hills, each of them well enough known, set out in a new relation altogether. It should not be depressing, it should be exhilarating to see how immense a labour it has been for Jenkins to give a satisfactory account of the play. It means that this masterpiece has retained its capacity to recede, to breathe, to protect itself from our grosser intrusions.

I wish I knew something about *Hamlet* that Jenkins does not know. Instead I have been lent the following observation by Dr Anne Pasternak-Slater. For II.2.573 ("But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall") we are told that

"the pigeon was a symbol of meanness being popularly believed to have no gall, which was notoriously the source within the liver of bitter and rancorous feelings." If this popular belief were error, it seems odd that the puns repeats it, saying that Ophelia is therefore common for the bird not cooked with its liver inside.

My last point I hardly dare mention, but since Jenkins tells us that Ophelia's distribution of flowers still seems satisfactory elucidation I thought I might throw it in. The question is to whom does Ophelia give the flowers? That fennel is for Hamlet is "abundantly attested". The editor quotes Florio's *A World of Words*, saying that *dare fennel* means "to give fennel, to clasp, to clog, to fledge, to flatter to dissemble." The same old meaning, as I understand it, is in the custom of Florentine wine merchants, who gave *fennel* (also flavoured with fennel seed) to the customers in the knowledge that if you first eat fennel it will make an indifferent wine taste good. As a derivative from deception, the word came to mean homosexual. Perhaps Florio was too nice to mention this.

Anyway, my point is simply this: that in a modern Italian production Ophelia could not possibly give fennel to the Queen, as Professor Jenkins thinks she should. The only candidate for the accusation is Laertes. Laertes is in love with Hamlet, which is why he tells Ophelia not to mock around with the Prince. Hamlet has turned him down, which is why Laertes wants to go down to Paris. Polonius suspects that Ophelia knows, which is why he is reluctant to let the boy out of his sight and why he has spied on him. He is to tell the baffled Reynaldo what's in his mind, but he cannot frame the words:

And then, sir, does a this - a do what I'm about to say? By Jove, I was about to say something. Where did I leave?

But there I must leave the matter, for the worst has already come to the worst. We have hit upon an interpretation which could kill the play off for ever.

Physiognomy, the science of bodily expression and especially the face was certainly older than the eighteenth century, and certainly to do with more than the nose. But noses matter. They have always figured in anatomical science and aesthetics, and the interest in the physiognomists of the eighteenth century lies not in their discovery of a new natural object, but in the constructions they placed upon it. In the exotic, literary uses of anatomical facts, the nose and its fortunes are placed at the mercy of Eros. For Sterne, the founding father of the absurd, noses share in the generalized sexual desire of his characters. They leave their classical, static place on the aquiline visage of authority, and become the pathetic signifiers of emotion. The nose, as part of the anatomical domain; by the end of the Enlightenment, through Sterne and then into the Russians, such as Gogol, it became the index of sexual (and political) force. It is even possible to trace the history of the nose as the homological organ of personal disaster into the history of psychoanalysis. Freud's one-time confidant Wilhelm Fliess was much concerned with the nose, its place as the penis of the face, indeed as an advertisement, through contour and size, for the twinned organ lurking below. The history of Sternian "cock and bull" stories reaches, as it should, into the idea of early psychoanalytic theory. The nose is luminous, as Edward Lear divined, and luminous with anatomical clues or marks of farcical disaster.

But noses are not the whole story, as Graeme Tytler shows in his *Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes* (Princeton, 1980). Tytler traces the history of the nose as a part of facial identity. Physiognomy was not self-sufficient for the Ancients, nor indeed for Renaissance writers, when the marks of the face were determined by celestial influences, and physiognomy was annexed to astrology. The central text here is the Italian Giambattista della Porta's *De humana physiognomonia* of 1586. Faces carried

over stolen Garrick leaves which survive here were after all the "wax" of a pecking order of substitutes. Eighty years after its flourishing, we have come upon the remains of what the workshop. These (at least) eighty-two leaves are what is left of a practical factory for reconstituting early dramatic quartos, for purposes of gratification and sale, for profit at permanent loss to a later collector. They are melancholy relics, and to the extent that reparations can be offered, they are going back.

Why did Wise keep them? There is reason to think that he hoarded the most damning scraps of correspondence and print regarding forgeries and retail transactions. As a criminal, he forever put off destroying the plain evidence of his guilt, the unlikely contingency of future use. But the survival of these leaves in the Pickering and Chatto stock has a simple explanation, and one is thankful for it. In July, 1939, at an auction sale of household effects in Hampstead, was the property of the widow of T. J. Wise, lot 173 contained "a parcel of 17th and 18th century plays, pamphlets by John Dryden and others." It was purchased for £1.15 (no great sum, in great value and no real bargain) by Pickering and Chatto, and eventually remained - at least in large part - their stock ever afterwards. Now these leaves are being presented again by Quarrich, through the Friends of the National Libraries, to the British Library, where they will be retained in a discrete group - not restricted to any one parent volume - for in the end more important even than the survival of the originals is the evidence of malfeasance and its detection. Future scholars, whether of the Restoration drama or of T. J. Wise and his diabolical rare-book-trade of his time and making, will find them there in a single package - unless someone picks them.

GRAEME TYTLER

Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes
436pp, Guildford: Princeton University Press, £20.20.
0 691 06491 1

JUDITH WECHSLER

A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris
208pp, with 161 black-and-white illustrations. Thames and Hudson.
£18.50.
0 500 01268 7

Afterwards, on becoming very intimate with Robert Fitzroy, I heard that I had run a very narrow risk of being rejected on account of the shape of my nose! He was an ardent disciple of Lavater, and was convinced that he could judge of a man's character by the outlines of his features, and he doubted whether anyone with my nose could possess sufficient energy and determination for the voyage.

We have it on good authority that anatomy is destiny, and here is Charles Darwin being examined by the captain of HMS Beagle, and looked at through the "physiognomical" system of the eighteenth-century Swiss pastor, Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801). Darwin's nose became the founding organ of evolutionary theory, a prophetic stem of anatomy that permitted its owner to enter the world of natural history and materialist biology. If Fitzroy had seen a shorter nose, or a bent nose, no *Origin of Species*. Instead, maimed, *à la Sterne*, with a now unsatisfactory organ, Darwin might have crept back to his father, apologized, and then carried his nose with him and become the failed person-naturalist, buried in Shropshire or Devon, from whom no one heard again.

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The construing of the face

Michael Neve

the results of astrological influence, but could also be compared to animal faces, with the usual rather unilluminating results. Tytler traces these various strands clearly, and in detail, noticing that physiognomy was not always linked to aesthetics (it could be seen as a piece of charity, and avoided, as with Leonardo). He argues however, that in the eighteenth century, the growth of aesthetic theory also accompanies a growth of physiognomical theory, preparing the background to Lavater's own system. This seems a little uncertain, and initiates a tone in the book - the anxious hunting for "physiognomy" at all points of the compass - that obscures certain issues.

Clearly, writes like Shaftesbury, Lessing, Schiller and Winckelmann were concerned with beauty, and with faces. But they were not necessarily concerned with physiognomy as a special subject in itself. To be something distinct, something

As with Anton Mesmer, it was part of the status of Lavater's "science" that he himself should have had considerable personal presence. Presumably he could stare, and stare well. The history of staring has yet to be written, but famous examples of staring occur, say, in the history of psychiatry: Francis Willis, one of George III's mad-doctors, would stare at the king, and, so the idea went, frighten him back from the abyss. Lavater would stare at the outer body, to find the soul within. And people, many of them aristocrats, would visit Switzerland to be stared at by this pastor. Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1775 onwards), his main work on physiognomy, was widely read, and in England drew the attention of Fuseli, Thomas Holcroft and Mary Wollstonecraft, and led to the famous English translation of Henry Hunter in the 1780s.

What of the readings of the faces themselves? Tytler unhappily draws

Separating out physiognomy from aesthetics, and from cerebral anatomy is one of the difficulties that a historian faces, Tytler included. He attempts to advance the arguments for the nineteenth century by associating physiognomy with phrenology, or the reading of skull contours as an index of character. This is a slippery thing to attempt, and he is not successful. As Tytler himself says, Franz Joseph Gall, the founder of phrenology, disassociated it from physiognomy, and phrenology certainly claimed to have "gone further" - in Foucault's sense to have "gone into" the subject through the brain - than physiognomy had done. At times the two subjects must necessarily have been close. But Tytler isn't always right in his account of physiognomy's relation to phrenology.

In terms of literary influence-hunting, however, he does a thorough job. He shows much eighteenth-century concern with facial clues to

But the thesis has become too generalized to make its points: physiognomy is not the same thing as "characterization". Judith Wechsler almost admits as much in her elegantly written *A Human Comedy*, which concerns itself with nineteenth-century Paris and with its self-representation, through journalism, popular theatre and caricature. For all the reference made to La Bruyère, Le Brun and Lavater, Wechsler brings to life the Balzacian caricature as an independent form, a geography of the city and its bodies, and then extends her view into mime and theatre. It is an excellent subject, and the book is full of fine illustrations of newspaper caricature and satirical prints. The connection to the details of physiognomical science still seems weak, as if satirical art were perfectly capable of developing its own taxonomy, based on realism and invective. When Wechsler quotes Daumier's description of a banker (large, bulky, selfish) and then quotes Lavater on "a type to be avoided" (large, small eyes, puffed-up lips), it seems a real connection. The "science" of physiognomy might be strangely irrelevant to the rich business of portraying social forms, from direct observation.

Richard Sennett, in his foreword to *A Human Comedy*, says that despite his great debts to Lavater and his life-long fascination with "the characters of Paris", Balzac is Balzac because his descriptions so far transcend the language of classification. Judith Wechsler conveys this exactly, by a careful study of individual work. When looking at Grandville (1803-1846), she knows just how far a private vision could take one particular social observer, away from Enlightenment obsessions with classification, and into an anthropomorphic surrealism of startling originality. After all, Daumier, Monnier and the others were delivered into a paradox of city life: that it has no easy natural history, no settled round of events, and can only be caught in private ways, on the run. A world of glimpses, of backward glances, fierce and ephemeral. No doubt, the caricaturists had to appeal to ideas of type, as Balzac appealed in his novels. But the interest lies in the individual use and form of the type, not in the idea of typing. In order to convey the moments of the city world, caricaturists could be said to use the "sciences" of expression or physique as aids: they were not ends in themselves, the static resting-points of Lavaterian science. City life and its recording might in the sense be irreversibly political, and not just "moral" as the eighteenth century used that word. Because of the work of Walter Benjamin, much is made when talking of nineteenth-century Paris of the silent observer, or the strolling, solitary spectator. It is likely that such silent observation will finally lead to private forms, perhaps journeying through physiognomy and type-theory first. Wechsler quotes the naturalist Buffon as one possible influence on ideas of "the observer", along with Gall, Lavater and Cuvier. This is an interesting idea, but prompts the remark that Buffon did not believe in limited ways - and was an opponent of strict taxonomies. Darwin, likewise, found taxonomies of insanity unilluminating. Balzac may be an exception, but the other subjects of this fine study all seem to provide their own classifications in the end, and to defeat the diffusion of an accepted taxonomy whereby a city could interpret itself to its citizens. These seem quite different from using a strict Lavaterian (or any other) inherited system, and to vindicate the artistic need for a private vision.

The arts of recognition - or non-recognition - concern both these books, which contribute handsomely to the history of that mysterious business, Sciences of the face, political art, classification or confusion? While both authors suggest, people independently, that the face and characters may be too strange to quantify, they also lead one to ponder further Oscar Wilde's remark, that only superficial people fail to judge by appearance.

The workshop of T. J. Wise

Arthur Freeman

In 1956 (*The Times*, October 18, "Forger and Thief", and *TLS*, October 19, "A Jotter Skeleton in Thomas J. Wise's Cupboard" by D. F. Foxon) the relatively snug world of rare books was shocked by a new tale of old theft - a history, fifty years on, of the mutilation, substitution, sophistication and resale of early English printed plays belonging to the British Museum. The magnificent Ashley Library of Thomas J. Wise (1859-1937), acquired by the Museum in 1937, was especially attractive in that "many of the Museum's rare Elizabethan first editions, copies of which, Wise possessed in superb condition, were very much the worse for wear" (W. Partridge, *Thomas J. Wise in the Original Cloth*, 1946, p.301). In fact it proved to contain, literally, the reasons for some of the canonical imperfections in the Museum's own collection. Altogether 206 single leaves of forty pre-Restoration quarto plays in the Museum, nearly all of them David Garrick's own copies, bequeathed by him, were missing from the bound volumes on the shelves. Eighty-eight of these leaves, identified by various tests, were found to be bound up in the Wise copies now acquired by the nation, where there might otherwise have been the gaps due to defective originals. One more was discovered loosely inserted into one of the Ashley quartos, apparently for comparison with a leaf already present or in preparation for an intended substitution.

Subsequent investigation showed even greater depths of depravity in the collector's behaviour. By 1961 (see D. F. Foxon, *Thomas J. Wise and the Pre-Restoration Drama*, 1959, and *Wise . . . A Supplement*, 1961) eighty-one more of the missing leaves had been located in two collections "serviced" by Wise early in this century. John Henry Wrenn's, now at the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas, Austin, had ac-

quired a specified portion of the antiquarian stock of Pickering and Chatto Ltd, as it stood before the recent transfer of ownership. This portion included all printed books and manuscripts before 1660, and all technically "imperfect" books - a special part of the basement stock numbering perhaps 3,000 volumes or fragments of volumes, mostly of before 1700.

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money from his workshop and his dupes. In 1956 even those who continued to regard Wise's forgeries of nineteenth-century literary pamphlets as a kind of gentleman's hoax, aimed at foolish collectors who deserved to be fleeced, had at last to despair of him.

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unexpected. Of 102 Pickering/Quaritch leaves, eighty-two relate immediately to the known thefts from British Museum quartos, four of them being certainly the original Garrick leaves torn or razored from volumes on the North Library shelves. At least four more, and possibly seven, are the original leaves from Wise/Ashley copies, which have been replaced by stolen Museum leaves. The remainder, precisely with the original thefts, these are no doubt will marry up with original quartos in the Wrenn and Altkan collections, or elsewhere, but careful scrutiny of many doctored copies descending from Wise will need to be undertaken.

Statistics first: twenty plays are represented in the Pickering stock by the eighty-two loose leaves. Sixteen of the leaves are all those specifically reported missing from the Museum copies of seven of these plays. Sixty-five are the majority of ninety-eight leaves missing from the thirteen other plays. In just one leaf which does not correspond to a Museum mutilation, but is, it seems, from another "contributory" source. Of these eighty-two leaves, four are from the original Garrick copies (F3 from Thomas Nabbes, *The Bride*, 1640; B4 from James Shirley, *Loves Labour's Lost*, 1640; and E4 from James Shirley, *The White Foxtail*, 1635); three are the originals from Ashley copies (H4 and 12 from George Chapman, *The Conspiracy*, and *Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron*, 1625; and 11 from Saint Patrick for the survival of these leaves in the Pickering and Chatto stock has a simple explanation, and one is thankful for it. In July, 1939, at an auction sale of household effects in Hampstead, was the property of the widow of T. J. Wise, lot 173 contained "a parcel of 17th and 18th century plays, pamphlets by John Dryden and others." It was purchased for £1.15 (no great sum, in great value and no real bargain) by Pickering and Chatto, and eventually remained - at least in large part - their stock ever afterwards. Now these leaves are being presented again by Quarrich, through the Friends of the National Libraries, to the British Library, where they will be retained in a discrete group - not restricted to any one parent volume - for in the end more important even than the survival of the originals is the evidence of malfeasance and its detection. Future scholars, whether of the Restoration drama or of T. J. Wise and his diabolical rare-book-trade of his time and making, will find them there in a single package - unless someone picks them.

Ugliest is best

Adam Mars-Jones

JOHN GREGORY DUNNE
Dutch Shea, Jr.
352pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£7.50.
0 297 78164 2

Dutch Shea, Jr. is a cynical novel, and not only because Dutch himself is, as he tells us, a "terminal cynic". Dutch has a lot to be cynical about. Dutch Senior killed himself in prison while doing time for embezzlement. This may have damaged Dutch Junior's prospects as a lawyer, but it also set him an example. He follows it by dipping into an estate of which he is custodian. He is separated from his wife, and his daughter was blown up by the IRA while on a visit to Britain. He lives in conditions of such self-imposed squalor that an angry burglar complains about the low quality of his possessions ("I been in jails turn this shit down"). The members of the Dutch Shea, Junior, Appreciation Society are exclusively pimps and mafiosi, whom he has somehow got into the habit of defending.

Corruption in this novel is more than a theme; it is something of an obsession, almost an infatuation. Dutch's corrupt father turns up again, in a more advanced state of corruption, when prolonged rain causes a mudslide in Goldman and Flowers Mercantile Park. There is much mutilation and decay, plentiful nutcases and accidents, and though the life of a pimp lawyer is unlikely to be savoury in all its details, the glee behind the disgust becomes disturbing.

Even when there is no obvious occasion for revulsion, no severed nipple, no shredded baby, Dunne finds ways of letting the corruptible body know just what he thinks of it. It excretes, therefore it is. It bleeds, it farts, it develops blackheads. At funerals it sneezes, spraying the flag with mucus. It has cellulite deposits on its thighs. It uses Compaize suppositories and Septura DS for cystitis and Hydro-Diuril for premenstrual symptoms and Naturesin-K for bloating.

The reader must be quite an aficionado of mucus properly to enjoy this book. Even when there is discharge, plenty on the level of action, the book further insists upon it. A urologist (referred to as a "becks checker") reassures a patient about his fertility: "A bazooka it's not. But you're not shooting blanks either." Dutch Shea, Jr., contemplates a client: "A molten range of eruptions and oozing carbuncles. Wonderful word, carbuncle. One of the best. Next to smegma, the ugliest in the language. Smegma has carbuncle beat by a car length. The conflation of best and agonized suppurating Catholicism, as advertised, or something, quite different? Does this book represent a tortured view of human existence, or merely a canny view of bookbuying America?"

Through the peep-hole

Laura Marcus

SONIA PILGER
Malden Rites: A Romance
278pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£7.95.
0 297 78165 0

"How nice to be able to say 'I've made love and slept'" is the hero of Martin Amis's *The Rachel Papers* remarks, before embarking on a description of a particularly grueling bout of sexual activity. "Only it wasn't like that; it didn't happen that way." Given the telling is inevitably telling the truth of sex, the reader may well be led to feel a similar nostalgia for the discreet hiatuses of former fiction.

Sonia Pilger has indeed been described as "women's answer to Martin Amis", the narrator of *Malden Rites*, Hannah Wolfe, is like Amis's Charles Highway, knowing, literary and much preoccupied with the gaining

Only in one area does the disgust let up.
Cat.

Cat is the daughter killed by the IRA (severed head in a bowl of lemon sorbet), right arm on the bonnet of a Bentley, and she often gets a paragraph to herself. When Cat died, Dutch stopped caring. He let things slide. He started using the short sentence. All the time.

Because Cat was different. She called butterflies "flybutters". She wrote her first poem at the age of seven. She called fear and death and the unknown The Broken Man (perhaps she had read an early manuscript of *The World According to Garp*, in which a precocious child calls the same dark forces The Under Toad).

Cat, in other words, is cute, and as a focus of values in the novel she is a disaster. There must be better ways of loading a dice than applying smegma to five of its faces, and sugar to the sixth. To make his mixture of disgust and sentiment plausible, if not palatable, Dunne employs a single device: the self-lacerating wisecrack. Cat was eighteen when she died. Volvo dealers claim their car has a life expectancy of 17.9 years. So: "Who would have thought she had the life expectancy of a Volvo?" This phrase is repeated three times in two pages. You see? He feels so deeply that he must pretend to feel nothing. His, you understand, is a tragic coarseness. The book also contains a disgusting stand-up comic, Jackie Gross, intended to make Dutch seem fastidious. But every character has alienated one-liners to deliver, in the same street-wise rhythm.

The book has plenty of plot, most of it concerning the parentage of Cat, whom the Sheas adopted. As the action proceeds, Dutch makes stylized announcements about his life ("I have spent a lifetime trying not to know"). My life is a Chinese box of uninvestigated mysteries" like a hard-boiled inner-city Oedipus but there is no feeling of uncovering or development. The cheaply ironical tone remains constant through all the legal jargon, the medical details, the lists of brand names and the never-ending wisecracks.

Once or twice, Dunne achieves an effect of some earnestness and power. One of Dutch's clients, for example, admits that he has strangled a pair of hamsters because they were "hassling" him. Perhaps it's just the refreshing change after so much hollow human horror, but those extinguished rodents are the most affecting thing in the book.

Dutch Shea, Jr. pretends to analyse corruption, political, social and moral, but his real ambitions are much humbler. Ignore the epigraphs from Hopkins and Waugh. John Gregory Dunne isn't exposing the spiritual emptiness of modern life, he isn't even strangling the hamsters that hassle him (worldly clerics, liberals). He is turning (disgust) into another cheap thrill, and fetishizing what he claims to denounce.

Kind-of-blank jag

Galen Strawson

LAUREL GOLDMAN
Sounding the Territory
307pp. Faber. £7.95.
0 571 11962 X

A deranged hero: it's one of the easiest ways of manufacturing fiction, and one of the hardest ways of doing it well. Mental disorder is an obvious topic for phrase-makers short on story who want to be novelists: if there's no real development — well, that's in the nature of a chaotic life; if no clear character emerges — well, that's in the nature of the illness. It provides stylish cover for the grossest sentimentality. And it's extremely economical: all the disparate bits and pieces in one's notebooks — random scenarios, excursions into fantasy, snappy, loopy exchanges — can be fitted into the story without doing too much violence to the reality principle, because part of the fictional reality is that the hero's own reality principle is askew.

The temptations of the genre are considerable. In *Sounding the Territory* it seems that Laurel Goldman has succumbed to them in the most dismal way. What she has in fact are a couple of dozen pleasing phrases. What she has made from them is a work of over 300 pages. There are no characters to speak of, only a few personae, or styles of mental illness, and some female bodies that speak. There is no story to speak of, only a collection of episodes arranged in temporal sequence, crippled by integrated flashback and mismanaged, implausible epistolary asides. There is no art in the book — no construction, no development. Nothing is shaped or stretched or put to the test; no insight is delivered. Perhaps the only thing that is effectively invoked, very much *en passant*, is the misery and anxiety of Jay Davidson's childhood.

Jay, alias Jesse James — his *nom de guerre* as it were — starts out in Bellevue hospital. He can't handle people or jobs, he's kind of blank; he has parent trouble and a "personality disorder". He takes a part in Ward Government and Mass Activity, he belongs to the Leisure Group, he goes to Daily Living and Psychodrama, and helps to "do" Evening Nourishments — along with Shipwreck, the Princess and Veronica au Lait and a lot of others with more ordinary names: Willy, who's always blushing; Paye, vicious, perceptive and four-mouthed; Franklyn, whose echolalia, schizophrenic malapropisms are always obliquely a propos (he requests the pressure of your company, he thanks his best for her hostility); Hamilton, given to old-fashioned courtesy and diction, who delivers a series of increasingly dithyrambic diatribes when elected to the presidency of Ward Government; and Silas who struggles to maintain contact with reality, but who wakes one morning with all the lines on his face vanished away, collapsed into his private mental devices.

In *Victims of Love*, Paul Sutcliffe is a full-time New York lecturer in English and a part-time novelist; his wife, Linda, is a full-time children's editor and a part-time parent. Paul, of course, is also a parent and recognizes the fact. With his liberal, permissive approach to human relations (he has two lovers), he is very good at mopping up the tears and generally pouring oil on the troubled waters caused, in his view

The genre is familiar, but some of the hospital episodes have a certain flair. Best are the patients' conversations, with their startling indirections, relevant-on-the-rebound, charmed and barbed. But the whole thing seems dependent on Lego psychology and a straining imagination that refuses to change down. Goldman's view of mental illness is in constant danger of sentimental, romanticizing relapse into melodrama and neat short sentences. Jay, fantasizing role-reversals with the hospital staff, pursues a vague, magpie project of data collection, trying to put the pieces together and make sense of the world. In flashback he goes through set-piece hysterical episodes (sleeping jag, paralysis jag, eating jag, distorted vision jag, feeling-cold-in-high-summer jag) as if they were course credits, and engages in mawkish sex — the "Do it. Do it. . . she lifts me hard to her. . . I feel it all wet and juicy" sort. "Unghh", says adolescent Jay, and "Oooh", masturbating as he talks dirty to his girlfriend on the telephone.

He drifts towards viability — no sense of this process is conveyed — and is discharged from Bellevue. Moving back to his New York flat, he finds it has been let to Carrie and Nora, aspiring actress and publisher's assistant respectively. They all move in together. Jay desires Nora, Carrie

Getting it wrong

Linda Taylor

DYAN SHELDON

Victim of Love
215pp. Heinemann. £7.50.
0 434 69526 2

All novelists are in some respects behavioural scientists: they look at their characters in society, they examine the insides of their heads, they observe their behaviour. Dyan Sheldon belongs to the detached anthropological school. In a sense, she is a reductionist; human thought, particularly when it comes to relations between the sexes, is at best primitive. Responses are often predictable and bear much more relation to the history and conditioning of mankind than they do to sudden insights or logical appraisals. Sheldon, though, avoids being clinical by her implicit sympathy, her irony and her fairness (given that men can't eschew chauvinism or women, dependency on men).

In *Victims of Love*, Paul Sutcliffe is a full-time New York lecturer in English and a part-time novelist; his wife, Linda, is a full-time children's editor and a part-time parent. Paul, of course, is also a parent and recognizes the fact. With his liberal, permissive approach to human relations (he has two lovers), he is very good at mopping up the tears and generally pouring oil on the troubled waters caused, in his view

portrayal of her character's self-irony, and her own ironic stance towards her fictional creation; this is confused yet further by her desire to be "taken seriously". Since the novel relies for its self-deprecation (doubled in this case by the narrator being both female and Jewish), the problem of the ironic tone becomes an issue of importance. Moreover, no clear sense of a temporal perspective is apparent; the narrator's voice is too knowing to be that of an adolescent, but doesn't appear to be a remove from the events recounted.

Distancing, however, would run counter to a trend manifested in those works by contemporary women novelists (Lisa Aldrich comes to mind) with which *Malden Rites* belongs. Momentum is provided by a breathless series of style, halted only by a series of sexual epiphanies. The narrative voice is confiding, eager to be liked, indiscreet. But in the case of Sonia Pilger's novel we have too little sense of what is speaking to us to look with more than mild interest through our allotted peep-hole into the bedroom.

desires Jay. Green-eyed Nora, too, Carrie and Jay set up home, in moments of domestic bliss. But Boredom soon purges them; personified and male; dogs him on his shoulder; sleeps with Delusions flourish — ballooning, collapsing flat. Silas turns up on a trip, Hamilton is in on a decision — in so far as he is capable — to go.

All set for apothecosis on the Golden West bus to Los Angeles, Jay apparently becomes psychotic: major hallucinations ensue. But it's hard to know how to take this: is he meant to be really mad, or just half asleep? — since all hallucinations are only there as flashback-like Fictional Devices, consist of Significant Episodes, old girl-friends, parents, brotherly staff, and so on.

Real and hallucinated, the novel suffers from and old indulgence: bleed and stain the bedsheet, the girls its powerful lions, the passage drop off (to sleep) like flies, the steady rain thuds down. Victim of a characterless, unlively Jay, some sort of bad-tempered reality; and then the book, like *Victims*, just comes to a stop in the middle, nowhere.

(and by association hers), by irrational outbursts of his wife, his niece and assured and good at it; does; Paul is a man who, incidentally, believes in love.

Love, for Paul, is the healer, a balm for all the vagaries of human conduct. For Sheldon, love is like, the desire that breaks up marriages and destroys the rationale of feminist thought. Linda, dissatisfied with her lot, only loves Paul when she has found an alien ear-ringing in her bed and feels security(?) of a lover, also much whom she has taken in order to get her husband.

Paul is writing the definitive autobiographical novel; bandaged in bold print juxtaposed with Sheldon's text reflect his present life and past, apparently, of his past. His characters are his mother, Rita (his wife) and his dead father, Walter. While abusing and patronizing Linda, Paul turns her into a sentimental focus on a creative and devoted Walter. Rita is in fact dying of cancer. She does dream, of being useful and loved by her children; she remembers the drunken dilettante her husband.

Dyan Sheldon is good at the way which people, through agonies of human frailty, get it wrong about other — they, or we, are all alike; strangers. And the stranger as a much internal as external code. Paul who loves women, also believes his mother is "humiliating, certainly dismissing him", and has nothing about "the timeless temptations" of wife, his would-be wife, his mother, Linda, who at thirty-seven feels lonely to be entering an early-menopausal weepy middle-age, can only to an android mother who talks only to her children, pours their breakfast and reads them bedtime stories.

The feminism of this novel is in the hope for it all, perhaps, lies in the future with Linda's "beastly" determined eight-year-old daughter, Patricia, who gives short shrift to her arrogant or winning sexism of her brothers alike. It is also not the main point. The strength of Sheldon's novel lies in its unrelenting shrewd portrayal of character, often revealing a mock-scientific way of she lightly and subtly puts everyone — fathers, mothers, children, dogs — in the same anthropological plane.

A Death in the Family by John Galsworthy, first published in 1908, is just been reprinted (399pp). Owen. £8.95. 0 7206 2280 4. The book, which is largely unimpaired, was its author's humorous Pulitzer Prize.

Double-low-tar 7, licence to underkill

Kingsley Amis

JOHN GARDNER
For Special Services
255pp. Cape. £6.95.
0 224 02934 7

Ian Fleming's last novel, *The Man with the Golden Gun*, appeared in 1965, the year after its author's death. I published *Colonel Sun: a James Bond Adventure* under the pseudonym of Robert Markham in 1968. The next Bond novel, *Licence Renewed*, by John Gardner, did not come along till 1981. Here now is *For Special Services*, by the same author.

Quite likely it will become a man placed as I am to say that, whereas its predecessor was bad enough by any reasonable standard, the present offering is an unrelieved disaster all the way from its aply forgettable title to the photograph of the author — surely an unflattering likeness — on the back of the jacket. If so that is just my bad luck. On the other hand, perhaps I can claim the privilege of at least a momentary venting of indignation at the disparate into which this publication brings the name and works of Ian Fleming. Let me get something like that said before I have to start being funny and clever and risk letting the thing escape through underkill.

Over the last dozen years the Bond of the books must have been largely overlaid in the popular mind by the Bond of the films, a comic character with a lot of gadgets and witty remarks at his disposal. The temptation to let this Bond go the same way must have been considerable, but it has been resisted. Only once is he called upon to round off an action sequence with a yobbo-ticking throwaway of the sort that Sean Connery used to be so good at dropping out of the side of his mouth. No ridiculous feats are required of him. His personal arrangement seems plausible, his car seems capable of neither flight nor underwater locomotion, his cigarettes in the gunmetal case have the three gold rings as always and M calls him 007.

Nobody else does, though. The designation is a pure honorific like Warden of the Cinque Ports; some ruling from Brussels or The Hague has put paid to the pristine Double-O

Section and its licence to kill long ago. Even the cigarettes are low-tar. But these and similar changes would hardly show if he had been allowed to keep some other interests and bits of himself, or find new ones. Does he still drink champagne with scrambled eggs and sausages? Wear a lightweight black-and-white dog-tooth check suit in the country? Do twenty slow press-ups each morning? Read *Country Life*? Ski, play baccarat and golf for high stakes, dive in scuba gear? What happened to that elegant international scene with its grand hotels and yachts? No information.

One thing Bond still does have girls. There are three in this book, not counting a glimpse of Miss Moneybags outside M's door. The first is there just for local colour, around at the start, to be dropped as soon as the wheels start turning. She is called Q'ute because she comes from Q Branch. (Q himself is never mentioned, lives only in the films, belongs body and soul to Cubby Broccoli, the producer.) Q'ute is liberated and a champion of feminism. Luckily she only has two lines, but one of these contains a jovial note of obscenity, and a moment later there comes a terrifically subtle reference to the famous moment in the film of *Dr No* when Bond said, "Something big's come up" in ambiguous circumstances and got the hoped-for laugh from the first audiences, thus, legend says, turning the subsequent films on to their glibly course. When you consider how much the original Bond would have hated these small manifestations of what the world has become since 1960 or so, you might be led to suspect a furtive taking of the piss, but nothing like it occurs again, as if Gardner, not the most self-assured of writers, had repented of his daring.

Bond's second girl has the cacophonous and uncertainly suggestive name of Cedar Lett — yes, kin to that Felix Lett of the CIA whom sharks deprived of an arm and half a leg in *Live and Let Die* (1954). Cedar is his daughter, a superficial and unprofitable device that superfluous and off one after the other. In a page: The three had schemed to steal the computer tapes governing America's military space-satellites, having fed drugged ice-cream to the personnel in charge of them. Bond, brainwashed by other drugs into believing himself to be a US general, is at the head of the party

such, but never short. Poor Cedar has no style or presence, no skills or accessories, no colour, no shape. And it is this wan creature whom Bond instantly accepts as his partner for the whole enterprise. In a Fleming novel — I nearly wrote "in real life" — Bond would have outrun sound getting away from her. To be accurate, of course, he would have done that even if she had been Pussy Galore or Domino Vitali all over again. He knew all about the way women "hang on your gun-arm" and "fog things up with sex and hurt feelings". But then that was 1953.

Bond scores all right with the third of the present trio, Nena Bismarquer, née Blofeld and the revengeful daughter of his old enemy, a detail meant to be a stunning revelation near the end but you guess it instantly. Nena — let me find the place — Nena looks fantastic and has incredible black eyes. Her voice is low and clear, with a tantalizing trace of accent. She wears exceptionally well-cut jeans and has that special poise which combines all the attributes Bond most admires in a woman. When she sees him first she gives him a smile calculated to make even the most misogynistic male buckle at the knees. As she comes closer, he feels a charge, an unmistakable chemistry passing between them. From expressions like these you can estimate the amount of trouble Gardner has taken with the figure of Nena and indeed the general level of his performance. It remains to be said about her that she has a long, slender nose and — by nature, not surgery — only one breast, an arresting combination of defects. Nobody really cares when she gets thrown among the pythons on the bayou. Well, there are pythons on this bayou.

There are two other villains round the place about whose villainy no bones are made from the beginning, Nena's husband Markus and his boyfriend Walter Luxor. One is fat and cherubic, the other of corpse-like appearance, but neither exudes a particle of menace or looks for a moment as if he would be any trouble to kill, and Nena casually knocks them off one after the other. In a later page: The three had schemed to steal the computer tapes governing America's military space-satellites, having fed drugged ice-cream to the personnel in charge of them. Bond, brainwashed by other drugs into believing himself to be a US general, is at the head of the party

of infiltrators, but a third set of drugs, administered by a suddenly renegade Bismarquer, brings him to himself just in time. This sounds, I know, like a renewed and more radical bid to take the piss, but seen in the context of the whole book and its genesis the absurdity, however gross, is contingent, mere blundering.

I have suggested that *For Special Services* has little to do with the Bond films. In one sense this is its misfortune. Those films cover up any old implausibility or inconsistency by piling one outrage on another. You start to say to yourself "But he wouldn't" or "But they couldn't", and before you can finish Bond is crossing the sunward side of the planet Mercury in a tropical suit or sinking a Soviet aircraft-carrier with his teeth. Hardly a page in the book would not have gone the smoother for a diversion of this sort. Why, for instance, does the New York gang boss set his hoods on Bond when all he has to do is ask him nicely? Echo answers why. The reader is offered no relief from his bafflement.

What makes Mr Gardner's book so hard to read is not so much its endlessly silly story as its desolateness, its lack of the slightest human interest or warmth. Ian Fleming himself would have

Rubbing noses in it

T. J. Binyon

WILLIAM BOYD
An Ice Cream War
370pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10868 3

"After Evelyn Waugh came Kingsley Amis; after Amis, Tom Sharpe; after Sharpe, William Boyd": so enthused one reviewer over William Boyd's first novel, *A Good Man in Africa*. The dust-jacket of his new, second novel, *An Ice Cream War* — also set in Africa — places him as a term in a very different and much more old-fashioned progression. "Boyd has taken some of the story-telling and narrative conventions of the novel of colonial adventure — as practised by P. C. Wren, John Buchan and Rider Haggard — and used them for his own subversive ends." In other words, he has changed his spots and has followed a satire by a historical novel, set against the background of the First World War, when a British army chased a German army commanded by von Lettow-

Vorbeck up and down East Africa for four years without achieving any particular success. Involved in the events are Temple Smith, a fat American with a sial farm in British East Africa; Captain Gabriel Cobb of the Duke of Connaught's Own West Kent Regiment, on temporary attachment to the 69th Palamcottah Light Infantry; his newly-married wife, Charlie; his younger brother Felix, an Oxford undergraduate, later a subaltern in the Nigerian brigade; Erich von Bishop, a German officer; and his wife, Lisa.

The place and time put the novel, of course, into *African Queen* territory. But as a more modern and more objective author than Forester, Boyd doesn't allow his characters any display of valour, heroism or even mild bravery. The military are relentlessly presented as inefficient, incompetent, disorganized and undisciplined; officers are bone-headed, obstinate, arrogant and often drunk; other ranks are fat, shambolic and demoralized. At the unsuccessful British landing at Tanga, between Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam, in 1914, Cobb wanders through the battle as even more of an ignorant innocent than Pierre at Borodino or Fabrice at Waterloo, until he is wounded and taken prisoner. Strangely enough the German army is treated with much more respect, revealed, in the glimpses we have of it, as a model of discipline and efficiency.

The author's subversive intent is demonstrated only too obviously by his

conceded that he was not the greatest delineator of character; even so his people have genuine life and substance and many of them both experience and inspire feeling. So far from being "the man who is only a silhouette" Bond is shown to be fully capable of indignation, compunction, remorse, tenderness and a protective instinct towards defenceless creatures. His girls have a liveliness, a tenacity and sometimes a claim on affection beyond the requirements of formula. Most of the Fleming books also have a more or less flamboyant figure assisting Bond and acting as a foil to him, such as Darko Kerim, the Turkish agent in *From Russia, with Love*, and Enrico Colombo, the virtuous black-marketeer and smuggler in "Risco". By a kind of tradition, however, perhaps started by Buchan with *Domestic Medicine* in *The Three Hostages*, the main character-interest in this type of novel attaches to the villain. Mr Big, Hugo Drax, Dr No and their like are persons of some size and power. They are made to seem to exist in their own right, to have been operating since long before Bond crossed their paths, rather than to have been run up on the spot for him to practise on. But then to do anything like that the writer must be genuinely interested in his material.

constant care to keep his readers' noses firmly in touch with those human functions which his more delicate predecessors would have passed by in silence. Characters retire frequently into the bush to lower their trousers and squat; Temple Smith returns to his farm to find that the Germans have left a noticeable trace of their occupation: "Every surface — shelves, table, chairs, cooking trough — was decorated with coils of human faeces, as was the floor." Even this, however, becomes a symbol for German efficiency: "It looked as if a battalion had marched in, lowered their trousers and, on the given command, had sat where they stood." Charlie's prophylactic methods against childbirth are described with ruthless realism, as are Felix and Temple Smith's encounters with prostitutes — both unsuccessful — in Bloomsbury and downtown Dar-es-Salaam respectively.

Subversion, however, like patriotism is not enough; though it is not easy to see what other aim the author has in mind. In the end, with all due respect to the sage of the dust-jacket, the comparison to earlier novelists fails. The book's interest is fragmented among too many characters for it to have the narrative thrust of their less self-conscious tales. It is not the story of a quest, like *Preston John*, of one man's fate, like *Beau Geste*, or even of a historical episode, as Rider Haggard's *Finished* narrates the events of the Zulu war of 1879.

Individual episodes are effective — some highly so — in creating the African atmosphere, while others are no less comic. Yet the comedy always seems artificially imposed, brought on by the introduction of character fabricated for that purpose, whereas in *A Good Man in Africa* it was undeniably organic and all-embracing. Though each chapter, in the annoying habit originally established by bad thrillers, is headed by a day, a date and a place-name, no impression of cohesion, tension or movement is achieved; incidents are oddly disconnected, and the conclusion is less than dramatic. Hidden beneath the high glaze of the surface message is perhaps struggling to get out. But its efforts are no more than tentative, and the script in which it is written remains indecipherable.

The Triple First Award, a new annual literary prize for a first novel, instituted last year by The Bodley Head, Penguin Books and Book Club Associates and worth £5,000, has been won by David Widdowson for his novel *The Viaduct*. The novel was chosen from among 641 typescripts submitted, and was the final choice of the two consultant judges, Graham Greene and William Trevor; it will be published by The Bodley Head in February 1983, and in paperback by Penguin Books.

A Boswell in Botswana

James Clifford

MARJORIE SHOSTAK

Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman
416pp. Allen Lane. £12.95.
0 7139 1486 6

Ethnography has not usually shown much interest in individuals. Its classics give us few memorable characters. We recall no particular Trobrianders, Nuer, Kwakiutl, or Balinese — although we know a great deal about their cultures. In spite of a sporadic interest by American ethnographers in the collection of "life histories", the writing of individual lives has remained marginal in a science devoted to cultural facts and collective representations. *Nisa* poses a sharp, though sometimes equivocal, challenge to this penchant for the general, the typical, and finally, the anonymous. It offers a personal approach to ethnography, one that takes experience as its object as well as its method. *Nisa* is the pseudonym of a fifty-year-old woman who has lived most of her life in semi-nomadic conditions. Marjorie Shostak belongs to a Harvard-based research group which has studied the !Kung San hunter-gatherers of Botswana since the 1950s.

The truths that emerge from *Nisa* are not limited to one life, or to its surrounding cultural world. The outcome of a complex collaboration, the book brings together three distinct "discourses". First, *Nisa's* autobiography — carefully elicited, translated, and cross-checked against other women's lives — is part of a continuing study of the !Kung, and of hunter-gatherers generally. Second, this shaped experience can be seen as a metaphor of woman's existence — a story that has a strong resonance with many of the experiences and dilemmas highlighted in recent feminist thought.

Third, *Nisa* is the story of an intercultural encounter in which two individuals create a specific domain of truth, and each itself becomes here, the subject of the book. *Nisa* is convincing on all three levels. Based on serious scientific work, it offers new perspectives and careful generalizations on !Kung life. It translates *Nisa's* words faithfully, presenting us with an engaging, irreverent, believable personality. It evokes the specific circumstances, pleasures and pains of fieldwork with candour and sometimes eloquence. A braided narrative, *Nisa* moves constantly between three discourses, which are not blended into a homogeneous authorial voice but are kept separate, in dramatic tension. This complex polyvocality reflects the epistemological predicament of many self-conscious ethnographic writers today who find it difficult to speak of well-defined "others" from a single, distanced position.

As a work of social science, *Nisa* holds its subject in constant relation to a cultural world. It explains *Nisa's* personality in terms of !Kung ways, and it uses her experience to qualify and correct generalizations about her group. These interviews serve to illustrate a wider survey of women's life patterns, menstruation and mood cycles, etc. For the general reader, a number of received attitudes about "simple" societies are corrected. "We are all too inclined to consider a people happy if considering them makes us happy," Michel Leiris's warning applies particularly to the !Kung, whose life "close to nature", whose enlightened attitudes towards child-rearing and sex, and whose undeniable ability to make them prime candidates for Western appreciation. But *Nisa's* story makes us feel, intimately, the force of ugly facts we might otherwise skim over. Only 54 per cent of !Kung children live to marry; adults in their prime are often carried off by disease. *Nisa* loses all four of her children and a cherished husband. Her memoir does not spare us the grief, the recurring struggles to forget, to begin again. Her account of childhood is also far from idyllic. It is tempting to assume, that children who have hourly access to their mother's breast for the first three or four years of life must be happy and

fulfilled. We fail to imagine the violence of weaning when it finally comes. *Nisa's* memories of sibling rivalries, of her terrible rages when denied her mother, of nasty fights over food, cast a different light on carefree primitive childhood. And of course there are other moments: "My heart was so happy I moved about like a little dog, wagging my tail and running around. Really! I was so happy, I shouted out what I saw. The rainy season has come today! Yeal! Yeal!"

We follow *Nisa's* discovery of menstruation, her reluctant first encounters with sexually-insistent playmates, her difficult first marriages (she constantly runs off to her mother), her slow acceptance of adulthood and the role of parent. In her eyes we see quite clearly the coercive force of convention, and particularly the problem of reckoning with the power of men over her body. There are extraordinary chapters on her lovers, and her struggle to maintain a veriginous balance between passionate adventure and the steady attachment of matrimony. Classical anthropology's focus on kinship as a set of rules tends to consign smoothly functioning — the antithesis of our own chaotic, divorce-ridden world. But marriage as seen in *Nisa* is a set of contingencies: agreements, separations, the clash of families; individuals learning to love, accepting commitment, misunderstanding each other, being unfaithful, breaking up, reuniting. There is nothing smooth or automatic about marriage in this "primitive" society. But what if *Nisa's* experience turned out to be aberrant? This is a question much on Shostak's mind. For at the same time that her informant's story contributes to better generalizations about the !Kung, its very specificity, and the particular circumstances of its making, create a truth resistant to the demands of a typifying science.

The book's second and third discourses — *Nisa's* life and Shostak's story of their encounter — cannot be sharply separated. Their structure is dialogical, and at times each seems to exist primarily in response to the other. *Nisa's* life does have autonomy, as a distinct narrative, spoken in her own voice. But it is manifestly the product of a collaboration. This is particularly true of its overall shape, a full lifespan — fifteen chapters including "Earliest Memories", "Family Life", "Discovering Sex", "Trial Marriages", "Motherhood and Loss", "Taking Lovers", "Growing Older". Indeed, by casting *Nisa* in the shape of a "life", Shostak brings into play a potent literary convention in the West — that of the "life story", a coherent and personal narrative, a coherent and personal narrative, a coherent and personal narrative. There is nothing universal or natural about the fictional processes of biography and autobiography. Living does not easily arrange itself as whole, continuous narrative. When *Nisa* says, as she often does, "We lived in that place, eating things. Then we left and went somewhere else," or simply, "we lived and lived", the hum of unmarked, impersonal existence can be heard. Out of the blurred background, a shape emerges in the occasion of speaking, simultaneously to oneself and another. *Nisa* effectively dramatizes this narrative process.

Woven into *Nisa's* autobiography is Shostak's personal account of her fieldwork. "Teach me what it is to be a !Kung woman" was the question she asked her informants. If *Nisa* responds with peculiar aptness, her words also seem to answer another question: "What is it to be a woman?" Shostak told her informants "that I wanted to learn what it meant to be a woman in their culture so I could better understand what it meant in my own." With *Nisa*, the relationship became, in *Nisa* terms, that of an aunt talking to a young niece, or a girl-woman, recently married, struggling with the issues of love, marriage, sexuality, work and identity. *Nisa* speaks, then, not as a neutral witness but as a person giving specific kinds of advice to a particular age with manifest questions and desires. It is refreshing to encounter this kind of concreteness in an ethnographic report. Usually one meets only "informants" speaking as if to everyone and his, providing

information rather than circumstantial truth.

Shostak hopes that intimacy with a !Kung woman will, somehow, enlarge or deepen her sense of being a modern Western woman. Without drawing explicit lessons from *Nisa's* experience, she dramatizes the way life makes allegorical sense, how it has meaning for another. *Nisa's* narrative is revealed as a joint production, and this emphasis on a productive relationship and shared experience clearly owes much to feminism, as do the book's more explicit themes. In recent years, feminism has brought about new approaches in anthropology — giving access to realms of human experience previously ignored. *Nisa* does not talk only about the world of women. When she speaks of areas already familiar to readers of the literature on the !Kung, she often provides something unexpected. The book consistently reflects a woman's (or rather two women's) viewpoint. And it is a salutary shock to realize how much ethnographic literature omits from its perspective, how little is known of what it feels like to be given in marriage about how women in various cultures think of menstruation, about how they describe men's genitals.

The process by which self and other interact in the making of ethnographic truth is seldom revealed in publications based on fieldwork. If Shostak portrays their relations in unusual detail, her book's polyvocal construction shows, too, that the transition to scientific knowledge is not smooth. The personal does not yield to the general without loss. At the end of her first journey in the field, Shostak was troubled by a suspicion that her interlocutor might be too idiosyncratic. *Nisa* had known severe pain; her life as she recalled it was sometimes quite violent. Most previous works, like Lorna Marshall Thomas's *The Harmless People*, had shown the !Kung to be peace-loving. "Did I really want to become — by publishing her — the one — to balance the picture?" On return trip to the Kalahari Shostak finds reassurance. Though *Nisa* still exerts a special fascination, she now appears less unusual. And the ethnographer becomes "more sure than ever that our work together could and should move forward." The interviews I was conducting with other women were proving to me that *Nisa* was fundamentally similar to those around her. She was unusually articulate, and she had suffered greater than average loss, but



Marjorie Shostak's photograph of an elderly !Kung woman, from "Epilogue" to the book reviewed here.

in most other important respects she was a typical !Kung woman."

Roland Barthes has written of "the impossible science of the individual". An insistent tug toward the general is felt through *Nisa*, and it is not without pain that we find *Nisa* generalized, presented as "an interpretation of !Kung life". The book's scientific discourse, tirelessly contextual, typifying, is braided through the other two voices, introducing each of the fifteen thematic sections of the life with a few pages of background. ("Once a marriage has survived a first menstruation, the relationship between the spouses becomes more equal." And so forth.) If such interjections are helpful early in the book by the end — as *Nisa's* own story gains momentum — we wish that this other voice, neutral, preoccupied with !Kung culture, would no longer interrupt. Indeed, one sometimes feels that the scientific discourse functions in the text as a brake on the book's other voices, whose truths are excessively raw and intersubjective. It may be, perhaps, an ethnographic desire that has yielded too much to a graphic desire.

Shostak is a superb photographer. Each chapter of *Nisa's* story is preceded by an arresting image of !Kung life. Most, but not all, are photos of women — taken during the life-cycle from childhood to old age. Shostak's !Kung are gentle, tender, intimate, the frame around all reveal relationships — with women at ease; squinting behind her, Shostak places the two opposite edges of the page, and looking we will bring them together.

A chapter on raffia weaving takes great deal of information about social and religious significance, and the raffia bags, which until now have been regarded more or less as souvenirs. In fact, it appears that certain designs are restricted to members of the various societies, and that the bags themselves have an important part to play in exchanges.

All in all, this is a remarkable work of research on a previously unknown subject, sometimes technical, always very readable, and excellently illustrated throughout.

LETTERS AND MEMOIRS

JAMES T. BOULTON (Editor)

The Letters of D. H. Lawrence:
Volume 1, 1901-1913
579pp. Cambridge University Press.
£20.
0 521 22147 1

GEORGE J. ZYTARUK and
JAMES T. BOULTON (Editors)

The Letters of D. H. Lawrence:
Volume 2, June 1913-October 1916
619pp. Cambridge University Press.
£20.
0 521 23111 6

"I hate writing letters," Lawrence complained to Blanche Jennings, in 1909; and to another correspondent he said that he sat down to write a letter only when he was feeling "pippy". Yet as these two volumes make clear, Lawrence was an indefatigable letter-writer. He also came increasingly to rely on letters as a form of communication. Indeed, the second volume in particular shows that letters became virtually the only way in which Lawrence could or would address certain people, because in a letter he could manage an uninterrupted monologue, could harangue, lecture and, above all, preach. As he famously remarked in a letter to Sallie Hopkin, "I shall always be a priest of love, and now a glad one — and I'll preach my heart out, Lor bless you."

That letter was written during the happiest phase of Lawrence's life, which came immediately after his elopement with Frieda and lasted while they were wandering together through Germany and Italy; and one can understand the exultant note that he strikes in letters of that time. Yet even these letters have about them a certain stident, heaving tone that must have come as an unwelcome shock to their recipients. And the truth is that from first to last Lawrence was ready to preach his heart out in letters. Thus, having told Blanche Jennings how he hates writing them, he continues:

You can't appreciate *Manon Lescaut*. What can you appreciate but something with a series of labels attached, bearing scientific names? You have cultivated a sort of intellectualism — flat thought-pansies — to the exclusion of everything sweeping and throbbing. *Manon Lescaut* is fine — you're narrow. You've shut up your vitalities in a few tight boxes . . .

According to James T. Boulton, Lawrence welcomed the opportunity to write to Blanche Jennings, a woman of radical political commitments, because "she was slightly older than he; she was detached from the local scene but acquainted with it; and he could be flirtatious, indulge his theatricality and boisterous fun, and experiment with literary tone and style." This may well be so, but it is a good deal less important than the fact that in the majority of his letters to her one can detect the rough beastly shape of what that is to come (including the out of blood consciousness), and also recognize a peculiarly unpleasant priggness, which may in part belong to the provincial intellectual, but is certainly integral to Lawrence's desire to impress Blanche. For he goes on:

I am fearfully happy . . . I am in love — and, my God, it's the greatest thing that can happen to a man. I tell you, find a woman you can fall in love with. Do it. Let yourself fall in love. If you haven't already. You are wasting your life. How miserable you'll be later! Nowdays, men haven't the courage and strength to love. You must know that you're committing slow suicide . . . I tried several women once — I did it honestly.

Do you know, I don't think you were fond of me? I was very fond of you. But you don't trust yourself, or you don't trust other people. You won't let yourself be really fond, even of a man friend, for fear he finds out your weaknesses. As if your good qualities wouldn't outweigh a dozen times your failings! But you mistrust folk — even decent folk. It is a blisimish in you, a lack of courage, a want of faith and of higher generosity.

Even if one leaves aside the boast about trying several women and doing it honestly — although it would be interesting to have had the reactions of Louie Burrows or Jessie Chambers to that claim — there is surely something deeply improper in the sheer selfishness of the letter. (It is worth noting that Lawrence regularly protested his fondness for McLeod by

perhaps, for the abashed candour of that last sentence, and I do not know that we could justifiably complain of the "experiment with literary tone and style" which leads him to describe the cloudscape in terms that blend Rossetti's "Blessed Damsel" with Leighton's "Fiery June" (although we don't think much of his visual sense). But: "My God, these folks don't know how to love." It is, I suppose, possible to excuse this as the product of youthful ignorance and vanity. Yet even so I find it difficult to swallow, because Lawrence is so clearly recommending himself to Blanche as a superior being. Harmless vanity shades into a bullying boastfulness.

This seems to have been habitual with him. Again and again one comes across letters to women in which Lawrence sets out to impress, either by bullying or, when he is addressing titled ladies, by adopting a fawning tone that produces the following (to Lady Ottoline Morrell):

It is rather splendid that you are a great lady. Don't abrogate one jot or tittle of your high birth: it is too valuable in this commercial-minded mean world; and it does stand well for what you really are. I really do honour your birth. Let us do justice to its nobility: it is not mere accident. I would give a great deal to have been born an aristocrat.

The editors remark that in the period covered by the second volume, from which that letter comes, Lawrence was making new friends and acquaintances, "striking in their variety as well as, in many cases, their social and intellectual calibre". What is social calibre? I do not deny that Lawrence was attracted to, even fascinated by, a title, and especially a titled lady, but this does not prevent him from writing letters that veer between something near affection at one extreme and at the other, hysterical rage, and suggests that intermittently at least he had a surer sense of the true worth of "social calibre" than have his editors.

That is understandable. I find it less understandable that Lawrence should veer between those extremes when writing to friends. "But Lord! — I'm off on the preach again", he writes to Edward Garnett, and the fact is that his desire to preach could and usually did make him utterly insensitive to his addressee. What, for example, are we to make of some of his letters to Arthur McLeod? McLeod was a fellow teacher at Davidson Road School, Croydon, on whom Lawrence clearly relied a good deal — he was the only person to be told about Frieda, and when Lawrence was in Italy with her McLeod sent them regular supplies of books. Yet when McLeod wrote Lawrence a letter in which he made have spoken of some personal disappointments or sadnesses, he received the following in exchange:

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Off on the preach again

John Lucas

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signation. Tragedy ought to be a great kick at misery. But *Anna of the Five Towns* seems like an acceptance — so does all the modern stuff since Flaubert. I hate it. I want to wash again quick, wash off England, the oldness and grubbiness and despair."

That letter was written from Northern Italy, in the short period of happiness before clouds began to gather, and even though Lawrence is unfair to Bennett, who had honourably explored the reasons for Anna's having to accept the sadness of her life without himself having accepted it, what one values in letters written at this period is the keen responsiveness they show to the Italian landscape and way of life. Lawrence came to love Italy for its warmth, clarity of light, and the candour which he found, or thought he found, in its people. There is no doubt that some of this is a projection of inner mood, for his experience of place is so closely entwined with his experience as lover that inner and outer landscapes become indissolubly fused. So he writes to McLeod: "One must love Italy, if one has lived there. It is so non-moral. It leaves the soul so free. Over these countries, Germany and England, like the grey skies, lies the gloom of the dark moral judgement and condemnation and reservation of people. Italy does not judge." If that letter shows how deeply Lawrence was upset by Weekley's behaviour, and the behaviour he attributed to or feared from others, it also shows how he is in the line of nineteenth-century English who found Italy a welcome release from the cloudy climate and the chilly women of their own nation. Lawrence, however, was less prepared to say "England, with all thy faults I love thee still". The immediate reason for this was depression over the problems surrounding Frieda's divorce. But soon after his return from Italy war broke out, and Lawrence was at first horrified and then driven almost mad by the war hysteria that gripped most of his fellow-countrymen. And, if that appears to overstate the case I can only say that many of the letters written in mid-war, and some of a virtual madman. Not all. One readily agrees with his remark, in a letter of late 1915 to Robert Nichols, that "The Courage

of death is no courage any more: the courage to die has become a vice", or with his protesting to Lady Cynthia Asquith that "In this war, in the whole spirit which we now maintain, I do not believe, I believe it is wrong, so awfully wrong, that it is like a great consuming fire that draws up all our souls in its draught."

Yet Lawrence's opposition to the war, intensified by his realization that the English rejection of Frieda was mixed up with war-fever, leads to a kind of inner exile which the letters fully record, and indeed exemplify. His view of England becomes increasingly that of a man driven into a final, desperate isolation, and anticipates the exile that he chose to make of himself as soon as the war was over. And whatever Lawrence might protest to the contrary, it is clear that as the war went on he came to hate not only England but more particularly the English. He may write in elegiac mood to Lady Cynthia about "the beauty and pathos of old things passing away and no new things coming . . . this England, these shafted windows, the elm-trees, the blue distance — the past, the great past, crumbling down, breaking down . . ."; but he actually wants to destroy it all. Letter after letter of this period reminds one of the Ruskin of *Fora Clavigera*, who spoke of his desire to blow up the English cities and begin all over again, or of the Nietzsche who wanted to outlaw all littleness. Indeed, one becomes aware that Lawrence's passionate liking for Bavaria, his involvement with Frieda and her aristocratic relations, and his reading of Nietzsche, fuse together to produce an attitude of mind in which he yearns for the coming into existence of a master-race who will possess an earth swept clear of the rest of humanity. And so he writes to Lady Cynthia Asquith:

When I looked back, out of the clearness of the open evening, at this Littlehampton dark and amorphous like a bad eruption on the edge of the land, I was so sick I felt I could not come back: all these little, amorphous houses like an eruption, a disease on the clean earth; and all of them full of such a diseased

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spirit... the whole thing like an active disease, fighting out the health.

And to Koteliansky:

I must say I hate mankind - talking of hatred, I have got a perfect antipathy. When I see people in the distance, walking along the path through the fields to Zennor, I want to crouch in the bushes and shoot them silently with invisible arrows of death... they creep in, and they are too many to crush... Oh, if one could but have a great box full of insect powder, and shake it over them, in the heavens, and exterminate them. Only to clear and cleanse and purify the beautiful earth, and give room for some truth and pure living.

It is possible to argue that the very act of writing a letter is bound to encourage this kind of hysterical dramatizing of mood, but the point is that Lawrence seems progressively to have withdrawn into letters as a way of exiling himself from the English, and that he desired such exile because it freed him from the problems of coping with the messiness of the historical moment through which he was forced to live. Once again, we may think this understandable. If so, we have also to recognize that Lawrence's hateful rejection of so many of his countrymen - even those of "social calibre" were dismissed as black beetles - makes it inevitable that, brief encounters with the Cornish apocryph, he should nourish the imagination on the impossible dream of Rannim. And when it became clear that Rannim would not do, and that the Murrys were a let-down, then all that was left was the chance to like remotest Cornwall because "it is out of England". The editors refer to letters of this period as "holding fast to the possibility of sanity in a world gone mad", and call them "among the most energetically brilliant" of Lawrence's whole career. They are certainly energetic, but more often than not what fuels the energy can hardly be thought of as evidence of sanity. For a better account of Lawrence during the period covered by the second volume of his letters one should refer to Paul Delaney's *D. H. Lawrence's Nightmare*.

These are the first two volumes of what will eventually be a seven-volume Complete Edition of the Letters, and the preparation and presentation of the text is exemplary. In Volume 2 something has gone wrong with the numbering of footnotes at pages 177, 187 and 292, but these are probably printer's errors. The content of the footnotes is a different matter. As far as I can tell they are meticulously accurate. (Although to call Albert Moore a free-Raphaelite painter would hardly do.) Unfortunately they are also painfully, even ridiculously, false. Surely nobody using these volumes needs to be told that Boccaccio's *Decameron* is represented as having been told in ten days by ten storytellers in Florence, or that Petronius is the putative author of the *Satyricon*, or that *The Seafarer* is "an Old English poem of 100 lines". And these are by no means the worst examples. Besides, if you choose to annotate every allusion or quotation, no matter how glancing, you should not miss fairly obvious references to among others Shakespeare, Ruskin and John Davidson. On the other hand, there are useful maps, a genealogical table of the Lawrence family and the editors also provide succinct chronologies of the years covered by each volume.

In *Everyman's Companion to the Letters* (400pp, Dent, £10.95, 0 460 09492 3), Barbara and Gareth Lloyd Evans begin by setting the works of the family in context with a calendar of events. The book is divided into four sections: The Family, The Juveniles, The Published Works and The Places. The first section is primarily concerned with the family's life at Haworth, Parsonage and records events up to Patrick Brontë's death in 1881. In the second section the authors concentrate on the writings of the imaginary world, *Gilgamesh* and *Angria*, of Charlotte and Branwell, and in the third, *The Published Works*, their essays, poems and include some contemporary reviews of the novels. The final section deals with the places connected with the Brontës and contains a simplified map of the family marked on it - many of these still only accessible today by foot.

Deep in the downs

Redmond O'Hanlon

DENNIS SHRUBSALL (Editor)

Birds of a Feather: Unpublished letters of W. H. Hudson with wood engravings by Marcus Beaven

108pp. Bradford-on-Avon: Moonraker Press. £6.95. 239 00205 9

William Henry Hudson (1841-1922) was born of American parents at Quilmes, ten miles from Buenos Aires, and brought up on the farms and ranches of the Rio de la Plata. As a child he "ran wild in a wild land", he tells us, his mind more or less unmolested by the erratic efforts of a haphazard series of private tutors, but rapidly filling with delighted observations of the rich bird life which surrounded him. At fifteen, successive attacks of typhus and rheumatic fever left him with a damaged heart which seemed to preclude the tough life of the pampas; he solaced himself with wide reading, became a convinced Darwinian, and, before he was twenty-one, had pursued his personal programme of study with such devotion that he damaged his eyes. Then in 1869, after travelling in South America, he set sail for London, the hub of the English-speaking literary world.

Hudson, six-foot-three-inches tall, broad-shouldered, restless, muscular, sallow and stooping, did not look like a happy inmate of a city. His initial loneliness and impoverishment were relieved only by an insecure post as secretary to the archaeologist Chester Waters until, in 1876, he married Emily Wigram, a woman fifteen years older than himself and the keeper of a boarding-house. In 1885 he published *The Purple Land* that England lost: *Travels and Adventures in the Banda Oriental* and in 1889, 1889, with P. L. Slater, his first bird book, an *Argentine Ornithology*; he also concurrently wrote an anonymous Utopian romance, *A Crystal Age*, published in 1887, in which peace comes to society only after sexual desire has withered away, a theme that was not conducive to high sales.

Today his best-known works are probably *The Naturalist in La Plata* (1892), *Idle Days in Patagonia* (1893), *Nature in Downland* (1900), *Hampshire Days* (1903), *Green Mansions* (1904), *A Shepherd's Life* (1910) and *Far Away and Long Ago: a History of My Early Childhood*, written in 1918 whilst he was being nursed in a convent hospital in Brighton. In 1901 he was awarded a Civil List Pension of £150 a year "in recognition of the originality of his writings on Natural History" which enabled him to mount his expeditions outside London, to Livingstonia his way into the interior of the English Southern Counties; to become a lone, stout-booted figure, resolutely walking the white chalk tracks over the lynch-sided hills, observing the sheep and disturbing the stone-curlews; to seek out the Dartford Warbler perched on the furze bushes of the Dorset heathland; to watch the woodland falcon, the Hobby, winnow its pointed wings before each glide, stoop at dragonflies and take swallows with ease; it allowed him to become a voyager, from inn to inn, an intruding anthropologist in an alien culture, interviewing the natives in the fields, and in their village huts.

Happily, there is far more of the genuine than the bogus Hudson in this recently prepared, and annotated, edition of some of his letters - mostly to John Ruskin, Harpington, a London actor. There are characteristic anecdotes from his travels:

Then I walked on the crest of the downs to Ditchling, talking with a shepherd or two on the way; then took train at Hassocks to Worthing. I slept there last night, and visited a Mr. Fletcher, a gentleman of means who had made the British Lepidoptera a lifelong study. This season he has reared scores of deaths head moths, and has some just hatched out. They were lovely, to look at in their soft clouded grey and rich yellow, and as they walked about over his kept up a constant

squeaking... Mr. F. is also interested in vipers... He says that always after four or five days they become ridiculously tame and can then be handled with impunity. He takes them up in bunches and lets them wind about his fingers.

We are reminded of the important role that Hudson played in the agitation to introduce some form of organized bird protection: "I have also had some correspondence lately with a Mr... Alas! It is of small use his veering his soul at the destruction of the Lyre bird of the Australian bush when the extermination of rare birds goes merrily on under his very nose on the Boreas. He tells me that ten marsh harriers have been shot this summer; and that is one of the rare species we desire to preserve. Again, he implores me not to say that another specimen exists in Norfolk, since if its existence there becomes known it will be immediately exterminated by collectors! What a state of things!"

He can be full of kind advice and sympathy: "Do you know, I don't think there's anything strange or very uncommon in all you tell me about that nervous condition you have been in. I have myself known those fantastic fears and tremors, and have been frightened at a mole - a less formidable creature than a stoat."

But we are reminded, too, that Hudson shared a common late-Darwinian, Lamarckian belief, popularized by Max Nordau in *Degeneration* (translated into English in 1895), that in times of ease, peace and plenty, advanced nations became soft, began to degenerate back into their evolutionary past; and so, although "almost every list" from the trenches "contains names of bright young lives that have been given for the Cause - lives of those we knew or sons of friends", the war, "one dream and hope, is a regenerating war for England and perhaps for all Europe."

Still, among the small tales of natural history ("Mr Ernest Hart told me a story of his pet raven which seems more wonderful. The bird sat on his garden wall and watched his next door neighbour bedding out some plants. Onions I think they were; and after the man had finished the work and gone away, the raven set to work, pulled them all up one by one and replanted them in a bed in his owner's (Hart's) garden") and set between the splendid woodcuts (which range from a group of pintail foraging in the index, where one of them is upended, his two central tail feathers sticking up out of the water like young shoots of the reed, made to a pair of wheatear bashing their white upper tail-coverts on the front of the



Dylan Thomas entwined in a wistaria vine during his second visit to New York in 1952. It was one of his series showing a "crucified" Dylan Thomas which became Edith Sitwell's favourite photograph of the poet. The photographer remembers the freezing January temperatures and Thomas's enthusiasm for the session: "Dylan spotted a large bare wistaria vine and immediately entwined himself in it, laughing, sniggering, and sinking as if crucified. I was enchanted by his pleasure in being before the camera." The picture and the reminiscences are taken from *Portrait of Dylan: A Photographer's Memoirs* by Rolfe McKean (111pp, Dent, £8.95, 0 460 04573 3).

dust-jacket) is a passage of Hudson at his best.

Temporarily settled at Roydon House (midway between Brockenhurst and Boldre) he describes a habitat he so ardently desired, and never attained:

After all my Sussex rambles among old picturesque buildings I see Roydon once more as the ideal beautiful house - a wonderful gem of red brick in its green and flowery setting. And the birds are wonderful. No cat or dog to frighten

them; the shyest ones have been tame. In a new close to the front door a bullfinch has a nest full of young and a couple of yew trees in the garden have a roundabout as big as a coconut hanging from a yew twig. You can look into it and see the mother sitting on her egg. Close by a robin is sitting on a cuckoo's egg; and as for thrushes, blackbirds and starlings one could fill half a bushel with the young birds in the small garden. In the evening you hear owls hooting, nightjars reeling and woodcock grunting and whistling.

From the fiction factory

Carol Rumens

MARGARET THOMSON DAVIS

The Making of a Novelist
134pp. Allison and Busby. £6.95. 0 8531 434 8

Margaret Thomson Davis, so the blurb to this book tells us, is "one of Britain's best-loved novelists"; she has to her credit nine historical romances and over 200 short stories. Her career "housewife" she made it as a writer. "The autobiography of an ordinary housewife" by her own account, "always was a writer and only just about married at times to be an 'ordinary housewife', whatever that is. Not herself a woman who took to scribbling. In order to fill the void left by school-age or teen-age children she nevertheless seems to be aiming at just such a readership."

The book's "autobiographical content is strictly circumscribed, and herself admits, 'the life is far better as happier than when telling a rattling good yarn. Clearly her autobiography, beginning in a pre-war Glasgow, of her public career that she was also to be a "How To" kind of a book

designed to encourage faint-hearted graphomanes. The result is a hotch-pot, an advice manual interspersed heavily with quotations from favourite gurus: Somerset Maugham, Lionel Trilling (?), D. H. Lawrence, John Braine *inter alia*. At one point the author ingeniously leads us to that great exemplar of the arresting first sentence, Franz Kafka ("A Kafka story called 'Metamorphosis' begins 'As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning...'). Sincerity and modesty are so patently present that the reader accepts with the merest twitch what would be unbearable from a more sophisticated writer: the repeated explanations of how deeply she feels about certain things (her views on nuclear war get a detailed airing), how intensely she sympathizes with others, and how she believes that reading novels can improve human nature. Margaret Thomson Davis the novelist would undoubtedly have left us to draw out of those conclusions on our own, but, as manual-writer, she feels compelled to spell everything out.

The author's gift for getting and results to the page is admirable, and particularly vivid portraits of her parents: a garrulous, musical, carefree mother and a father, gauché among adults but with a rare gift for communicating with children. Whatever her human qualities, however, her parents were brashly dismissive of the young Margaret's

declared ambition to become a writer ("Aye, we know, hen, but what do you want to work at?"). After her fifth year had been rejected, Margaret determined to get into print and dashed off a letter to a women's magazine, and was quickly rewarded. Thus her literary career was launched. It proceeded apace, via the D. C. Thomson organization, whose editors operated a strongly hierarchical system of hospitality to their authors. The successful writer would graduate from invitations to morning coffee with an editor, to Glasgow to a whole day at the firm's Dundee, with an overnight stay in hotel. At Christmas, authors would send a tartan tin of shortbread.

The advice Margaret Thomson Davis gives her readers is sound and practical enough, though much of it has been said before. And glimpses of her professional works - in any medium - are always fascinating. Whether the art of fiction can really be learned is debatable; it may be that there is something to be said for every writer having to undergo a private process of trial and error in order to forge his own imaginative order. But even if novel-writing, at least in craft, can be learned, do we really need more novels - save by the talented and compulsive who may have no choice in the matter? I dread the time when everybody succeeds in giving birth to the novel.

Implications of the impossible

A. L. Loeb

J. L. LOCHER (General Editor)

Escher: With a Complete Catalogue of the Graphic Works

351pp, with 36 Colour and 570 black-and-white illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £35. 0 500 0953 6

The Dutch graphic artist M. C. Escher died ten years ago this Spring; since that time interest in his work has continued to increase. It is perhaps significant that, although Escher was a superbly skilled craftsman, his work gained popular attention at just the same time when Conceptual Art became fashionable. In historic perspective, Conceptual Art was a logical reaction against modernism and the International style: the concept mattered more than purely objective design. The concept is also very important in Escher's work, sometimes more so than its visual quality; this may account for the fact that Escher gained earlier recognition among scientists than he did among his fellow artists. Escher's skill as a graphic artist, however, has given us an enduring body of work, whereas Conceptual Art has, by its very nature, proven to be ephemeral.

Escher is a fitting tribute to the artist on the tenth anniversary of his death; the original Dutch version appeared in 1981 (Meulenhoff, Amsterdam). J. L. Locher is the principal editor; the authors are F. H. Boom, J. R. Kist, J. L. Locher and F. Wierda, with contributions by Bruno Ernst and Escher himself. Locher, at present Professor of Art History at the University of Groningen, established the Escher archive at the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague, and was responsible for the magnificent exhibition at that institution in honour of Escher's seventieth birthday in 1968. Kist is a younger brother of one of Escher's closest friends, Ernst, a teacher of mathematics, author of *The Magic Mirror of M. C. Escher*

(Meulenhoff, 1976), has contributed a mathematical analysis of Escher's work. Boom, Locher and Wierda provide us with an exhaustive illustrated catalogue of his graphic output. Escher's own contribution is a new edition of his small volume commissioned and published in 1958 by the Utrecht bibliophile club de Roos in a limited edition. Escher came to regret the limited circulation of this volume; he would be pleased to know that it is now more accessible.

It is a pity that Escher, although so exhaustive in most other respects, does not contain a bibliography and list of references to the many books and articles written about the artist. Of these, *Grafiek en Tekeningen van M. C. Escher* was one of the earliest, having appeared in a variety of formats and languages from 1959 onwards. In 1965 the International Union of Crystallographers published Carolina MacGillivray's *Symmetry Aspects of M. C. Escher's Periodic Drawings*, a book primarily intended as an accessory in the teaching of crystallography, but reprinted by Abrams as *Fantasy and Symmetry*. The catalogue of the 1968 exhibition in the Hague eventually developed into Locher's *The Worlds of M. C. Escher* (1971), and Bruno Ernst's *The Magic Mirror of M. C. Escher* followed in 1976. These works complement each other remarkably well, and are in turn complemented by Escher. Whereas *The Worlds*, being structured by the 1968 exhibition, highlights Escher's effect on, and reflections from, the worlds of art, mathematics and psychology, Escher permits us an intimate glimpse into the artist's studio and home life. Although the English translation is certainly commendable, those able to read the Dutch original will be rewarded by its idiom, which is so characteristic of Escher.

Central to this book are excerpts from a lecture which Escher gave to friends of the municipal museum in Alkmaar in 1953, where he is quite explicit about technique as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. He states as his purpose the revealing

The Nail at work

Frances Spalding

MARGARET GARDINER

Barbara Hepworth: a memoir
63pp. Edinburgh: Salamander Press. £6 (paperback, £3.95). 0 907540 09 0

Distressed by an inaccurate account of her first marriage, Barbara Hepworth wished someone would write the history of her circle, dealing with facts and feelings in a way that would give them order and vitality and which would not resort to sensationalism. "A job for you, Margaret?" she asked her close friend. The invitation was never taken up. The book Margaret Gardiner has now written is only a short personal memoir. It nevertheless contains several valuable insights into that constellation of talent that converged on Hampstead in the 1930s and which Herbert Read once termed "a nest of gentle artists".

The author herself played no small part in his tale. A lifelong friend of Auden; she had a gift for recognizing talent and did not flinch from the unorthodox. She moved among intellectuals and was able to introduce Hepworth and Ben Nicholson to Adrian Stokes and the scientist J. D. Bernal, both of whom were in immediate sympathy with the aims of the two artists. She also brought the work of her friends, forming, to some extent by chance, the impressive collection which in 1978 she donated to the Pier Gallery at Stromsgade in the Orkneys. No mention of her role as patron is made in this book, but such demonstrative friendship must have been crucial at a time when Hepworth was reduced to making masks for Elizabeth Arden's salon.

Hepworth herself emerges as a complete professional, tackling tennis

and communicating of dreams, ideas and problems; he considers the illusion which an artist wants to suggest more important than the material means through which he creates this illusion. Awareness of the de-materialized illusion is at the root of Escher's impossible objects: he believes that the artist can, in two dimensions, only suggest a three-dimensional reality. When his ambivalent suggestions of concavity and convexity lead to cognitive dissonances then it is our own or culture-induced extrapolations of them into a third dimension which is at fault, not the two-dimensional reality created by the artist.

In the Alkmaar address, Escher expressed a sense of discomfort in the presence of fellow artists, saying that he felt more at home among those whose interests are analytical rather than emotional. He is convinced that artists who profess that they work for themselves only would actually be able to continue to create if isolated on an uninhabited island; his significance as a communicator is probably what first attracted MacGillivray, Coxeter and the Penroses to Escher's work. In Alkmaar, Escher stated his artistic creed: artistry is determined not only by the quality of the ideas which one would like to communicate to others, but also by the artist's ability to communicate them with a minimum of distortion. N. G. de Bruyn, professor of mathematics at the University of Amsterdam, in his preface to the catalogue of the large Escher exhibition which was held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam on the occasion of an international congress of mathematics in 1954, stressed the importance in Escher's work of the same playfulness which constitutes to most scientists the charm of their profession. It is very difficult for mathematicians and scientists to communicate this playfulness to a broader audience. Escher's art, although unique and apparently somewhat isolated in the world of art, occurred at a time when it filled a need; and it continues to do so.

As early as 1951 *Time* and *Life* magazines devoted articles to the work of Escher; since then the media have continued to make his work available to a broad audience. Escher's media of lithography, etching, wood and linocut, being intended to provide multiple copies, lend themselves well to reproduction. In the 1960s unauthorized day-glo reproductions of his graphic work appeared in California and elsewhere. As a result, only a fraction of those who were introduced to the artist's work through reproductions, have actually seen originals by Escher. The meticulous care in his choice of inks, papers and colours, and the amazing control, down to the minute scales of his circle and square limits, can best be appreciated in his original works. Because the concepts and linear aspects of his work are so important, the viewer who is exposed only to reproductions may miss the subtleties and sensitivity inherent in Escher's own products, we must remember that, whenever possible, and to the end of his career, Escher printed his own work, or worked very closely with carefully chosen printers.

The quality of the reproductions in *Escher* is generally very high: many are in colour, and are reduced from the original in size by a factor of only two thirds. Nevertheless, in a subtle woodcut like "Mud Puddle" the reflected sky is an even light green in the reproduction, whereas in the original it changes from light to dark grey. In addition to the illustrations in the body of the text, Escher includes a complete illustrated catalogue of Escher's graphic work followed by fifteen pages of additional data. After the artist's death, six plates were found of which no prints were known. Of these, five, namely one linocut and four wood-blocks, were printed for the catalogue. The sixth, a remarkable variant of catalogue no 334 (Balcony), could not be printed because in doing so the drawing would be erased; it is therefore shown in a photograph. Altogether this illustrated catalogue was produced with care and consideration for scholars who will

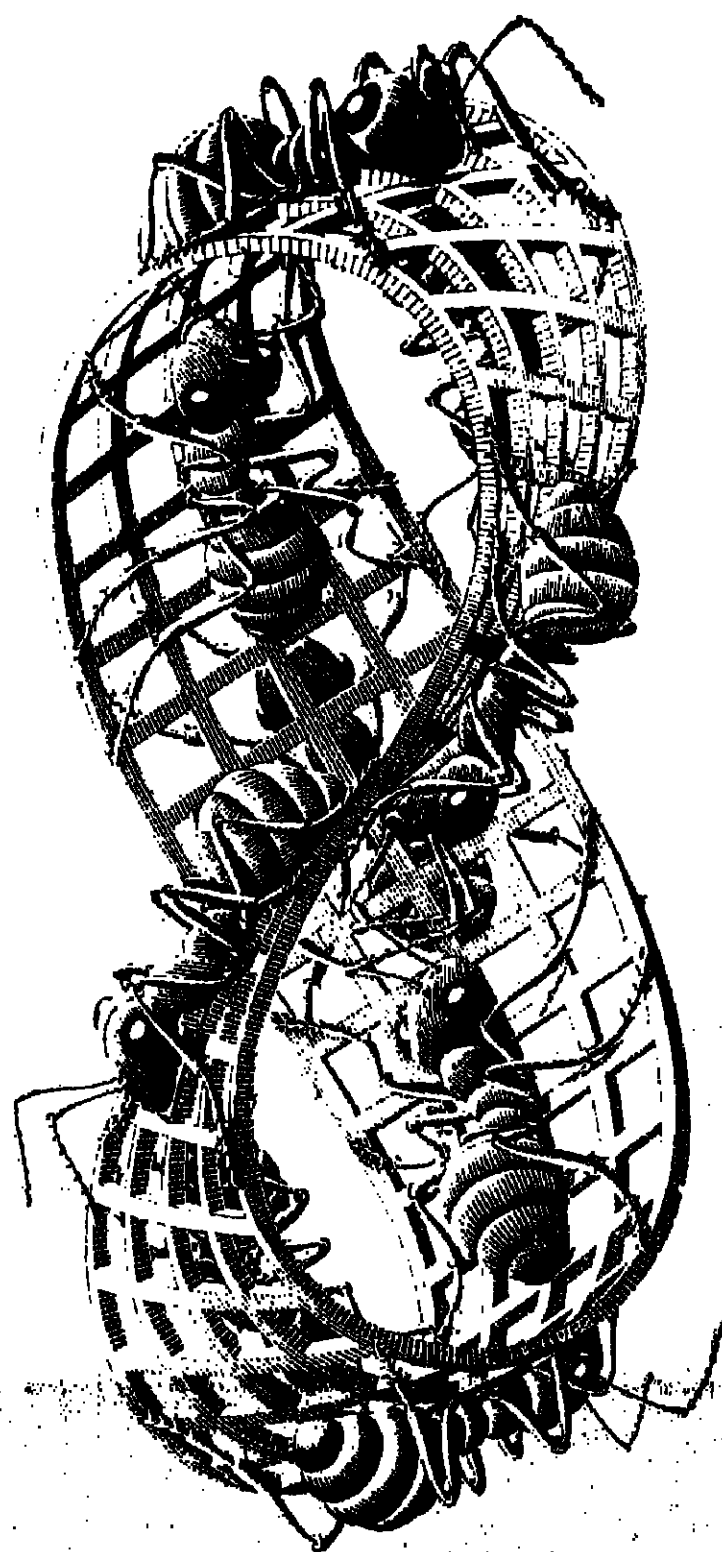
"Möbius Strip II (Red Ants), February 1963", a woodcut by M. C. Escher from the book reviewed here.

without doubt find it a useful and practical resource.

Escher's own contribution, the bibliophile publication of 1958, is very welcome in its re-printing here, because it provides an insight into the artist's method as he himself expressed it at that time. It is, however, not as informative as his Alkmaar address, nor as stimulating as his comments published by Polygon along with a set of slides of Escher's work. The later analyses by MacGillivray and Ernst appear to have superseded this 1958 article. It may be that in the past twenty-five years we have matured together with Escher's work, but it is also true that the perspective of others is frequently more interesting than that of the artist himself.

Escher's own letters, letters to his sons George and Arthur, and the extracts from the diaries of G. A. Escher, M. C.'s father, have lost none of their spontaneity and freshness. Maurits Cornelis Escher was born in Leeuwarden, the capital of the historically autonomous northern province of Friesland. His father, an engineer, had rented part of what had once been the palace of the stadholders of Friesland, direct ancestors of the present queen of the Netherlands. This place has now been restored, and is a museum housing one of the principal collections of Dutch ceramics, mainly antique tile labels. In the garden stands a column of Escher's design, a tribute both to the artist whose birthplace it graces, and to the place which Escher's work assumes in the context of the history of art in the Low Countries. Escher acknowledges his indebtedness both to Hieronymus Bosch, the medieval Dutch mystic and the modernist he studied in the Netherlands. The illusory clarity of his work has been a beacon to those who

in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, anamorphic art, in which spherical, cylindrical or conical mirrors were used to encode and decode heavily distorted patterns, became very much the rage in the Netherlands, and Escher's interest in distorting mirrors is reflected in works produced over more than thirty years, from 1921 to 1955. Although he acknowledges his indebtedness to the Moorish designs in the Alhambra, there can be no doubt that Escher was, in his tilings of the plane, also strongly influenced both by the Delft and Prisian tiles which surrounded him in his youth, and by the patchiness of the Dutch landscape. He designed the majolica tiles on the floor of his home in Via Alessandro Pericoli in Rome, and it cannot be mere chance that the earliest Escher print to achieve popularity in his homeland was "Night and Day" (1938), in which the Dutch landscape at night and in daylight provides the tiling pattern. Although the earlier work showed primarily the Tuscan mountain regions where he loved to travel in his youth, the mature work for which he is best known, the tiling of the plane, was done in Holland, though the Mediterranean impressions remain. His career in this respect parallels that of the composers of the Netherlands of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, who migrated to northern Italy in their youth, but many of whom returned home in their maturity. Like their work, Escher's visual polyphony appeals to the intellect more than to the emotions. In the fifteenth century, however, music was, in the quadrivium, allied with mathematics. In the twentieth century there is little appreciation for the unity of art and mathematics. M. C. Escher's work has been a beacon to those who would restore this unity.



Observations of the ordinary

Alan Brownjohn

V.J. LEE (Editor)

The Individual and His Times: a selection of the poetry of Roy Fuller 99pp. The Athlone Press. £2.25. 0 485 61008 6

Probably no living English poet has taken up more constantly than Roy Fuller the themes of the man in the street and the poet in his society. He feels himself to be an ordinary man, a member of a mass civilization, with a job (albeit a responsible one, as solicitor to a large building society) which ties him to quotidian matters: "Builders of realms, their tenants for an hour." But as a poet, as an alert and mordantly perceptive observer with an ironic overview of human affairs and a reverence for the "glamour of unapproachable geniuses," he is really rather a special version of the man on the Woolwich omnibus. Much of his verse is about the ambiguities generated when one of these figures takes on the role of the other, and for most of his writing life he seems to have seen himself wavering uneasily between the two. Yet this dilemma has never been a disabling one. Fuller's triumph is to have made from it a poetry which has looked outwards from the experiences (including the books and the music) mulled over in reflective solitude, and produced a continuous, highly individual commentary on the malaise of the time.

The characteristic Fuller preoccupations took shape in his poetry very gradually, and in ways which V.J. Lee's selection — arranged under six thematic headings rather than chronologically, with no note of the separate books from which the poems come — does not easily reveal. Most of the poems in the very early volumes are graphically descriptive and immediate: in *The Middle of a War* (1942) things were moving with alarming speed, and there were distinctions to be made between "August 1940" and "October 1940" in poems with those titles. This, in its way, is "social reporting," and Louis MacNeice (who coined the phrase) might have approved the intention if it did not influence the style. Fuller's mood seems passively observant, not actively committed or indignant, and not nearly as "dogmatic" as he believes. The reflective note and muted romanticism suggest the influence of Stephen Spender at least as much as W.H. Auden — about whose influence Fuller is so candid as to state how lucky he feels himself to be in falling under it.

The kind of war poetry Fuller wrote was especially typical of the Second World War: that of the serviceman left waiting for something to happen, ending tension and loneliness either in Britain or in foreign places which are seen all the more sharply for the alienation imposed by service routines. Not much of this is shown in the selection's sparse representation of the wartime Fuller; and there is no way of telling from it how he turned "service experience to good account in some excellent poems about Africa in *A Last Season* (1944). But what we do have are the early signs, from his first post-war book, *Epitaphs and Occasions* (1949) of this later and more familiar Fuller beginning to emerge.

The clues are to be found in the witty octosyllabic couplets of the "Dedicatorial Epistle" and the "Obituary of R. Fuller." The views expressed are emphatic, and pointed topical references (including literary references) abound. But a wry sense of limitation is pervasive:

I might have cut a better figure
When peace was longer, incomes bigger.
The shambles would have seen me thrive
Dyspeptic, bookish, half-silly.
Even between the wars I might
With luck have written something bright.

The grandeur of the greatest art
("The Wagner we await") is indubitable and magnetic, even in an age which does not heed it. But it will elude Fuller, in his "small-bourgeois elements." His infant traumas somewhat worse / he might have written better verse." Creative pursuits come to seem difficult to reconcile with the demands of a more mundane world. And yet

from this point onwards he steadily expands his technical resources and widens the range of his themes: the poet of limits becomes the poet of a rueful humanist vision for whom man's very inadequacies have their necessity.

Such a development has to be intuited, by the reader of *The Individual and His Times*, from Fuller's idiosyncratic and entertaining introductory essay, since it cannot be seen in the arrangement of the editor's choice of poems. A "selected poems" ought to be not only representative in character, but an incentive to readers to delve further. The six sections here allocate the poems to approximate categories such as "The Poet and his Art," "The Poet of Everyday Life" and "War"; and this affords one method of studying them. But it fails to show the growth of this poet's mind and technique as he accumulates slim volumes and reacts to events. And it gives no sense of how Fuller's work has alternated unexpectedly between a "high" style, in which he achieves genuine power and eloquence using traditional and challenging verse forms with impressive ease, and a "low" style employed to treat details of everyday living in an engagingly bizarre fashion. In fact, the individual volumes from the 1950s onwards are indispensable; and an updating of the *Collected Poems* of 1962 is certainly overdue.

Counterparts (1954) brought the first wholly successful poems in the "high" Fuller manner; not so much with the slow "Rhetoric of a Journey," or even the neat satire of "Translation," which are both included here, but with the graver cadences of "A Wet Sunday in Spring," which is omitted:

The embattled green proliferates like cells,
I think feebly of castles, wrong organisations,
Incurable leaders, nature lying in wait
For weakness like an animal germ.
And aircraft growing in the summer air.
Mankind is mistaken, pitiable,
dangerous and uneasy, and the poet in
this society feels both neglected and
guilt-ridden. But Fuller, enjoying
precarious security, finds himself
nudged into feeling by the smallest
kind of symbolic event:

A strange dog trots into the drive, sniffs,
And pees against a mudguard of my car.
I see this through the window, past The
Times,
And drop my toast and impotently glare

And so the entertainment of the morning
Headlines is temporarily spoiled for me;
During my coffee, I must keep my
warming.
The fate of millions take half seriously.

This poem, "Inaction," is a fine example of his "low" style: here he has become the laureate of the little symbolic disturbances which break the even-temper of living with reminders of something else: the spider in the bath, the lost fountain pen, the feel of a jelly baby ("In its rigid arms / Held close against its side. / And absolute identity with others. / Its pathos and fate reside. / That else it had not died.")

None of this, however, prepared Fuller's readers for either the sustained power of the finest poems in his 1957 volume, *Brutus's Orchard*, or the verse experiments of *New Poems* in 1958, arguably his two best books. In his introduction, he says of *Brutus's Orchard*: "In a sense all the poems were set in a place where the love for wife and children, and the wish to create, were threatened by tyrants, injustice, — and the 'urgings of conspirators.'" For "Caesar's Rome," then, read the post-war world — or perhaps even post-Suez Britain — and its conviction of a noble past and its dismal sense of impending menace or chaos in the present. The handsome format of *Brutus's Orchard* (with almost twice the page-area of *Counterparts*) allowed the poems to expand in breadth of outlook and technical confidence, developing ingenious and moving variations within the unity of this theme.

In the poem from *Brutus's Orchard* included in this selection, the process can be seen in the flexible pentameter of "The Idea of March" or the succinct couplet of "Pictures of Winter" (or, also more menacing — world. And yet

art"). But there has been no space for any of the "Mythological Sonnets," or the chilling quatrains of "Discordances" ("Even smooth, feared executives have leisure / To show the inadequacy of their love"), or the sweeping stanzas of "One and Many" ("I read of crises and prepare for living / In that strict hierarchy / A miser body made for giving / And which prepared for war desiring love"). And the saddest omission is "At a Warwickshire Mansion":

In the dark garden of the ugly house
A group of leaden statuary perishes;
Moss grows between the ideal rumps and
papa
Cast by the dead Victorian; the mouse
Starves behind massive panels; paths
rejoice
Like more principles; the surrounding
shires
Darken beneath the bomber's crawling
wings.
The terrible simplifiers jerk the strings.

Such high points of Fuller's high style do not get their due; but nor is there anything at all from *Buff* (1965), the first book to follow the *Collected Poems*, where the poet relaxes again into a more personal mode, a riddling one in the sequence of thirteen-liners "To X," love poems by a kind of sonnet out of a sort of villanelle, and a weirdly observant one in his "Bagatelles," which look ahead to those sharp, laconic comments on day-to-day life which he assembles in batches in his most recent books.

From *New Poems* V.J. Lee reprints, in two different sections, just five short poems, "Creeping," "The Art of the Apple" and "In Memory of my Cat, Domino" are in the high style, "Chinoiserie" in the low, as is "Road Safety":

"Watch my behind not hers"
by gum it confirms what I have
Often thought: I shall crash looking at a girl.

What is missing in this arrangement is any indication of Fuller's venturesome leap into new verse forms. "The springs of verse are flowing after a long / Spell of being bunged up"; and the adoption of the syllable-count is remarkably well suited to Fuller's sometimes ungainly diction, its occasional blending (in the low style) of almost legal exactness with half-humorous colloquialisms. The introduction records this change of gear, but in this selection all sense of surprising — and surprisingly easy — adaptation of Fuller's slightly awkward eloquence to syllables is lost.

New Poems is a distinguished and varied book, packed with absorbing argument concerning the role of art in human society and the status of the artist. Already there are hints of the autumnal note which prevails in Fuller's latest two volumes, *From the Joke Shop* (1975) and *The Reign of Sparrows* (1981); these are well-represented by about a quarter of the poems in this selection. It is valuable to the choice towards the later work with an opening group, "The Passage of Time," where poems written in, and about, the poet's seventh decade predominate. This is not a tactic which is going to draw new, younger readers into Fuller's poetry; the spread might have been wider.

Nevertheless, these poems, combining self-deprecating humour and irony with meticulous recording of tiny moments ("Strange that obsessive observation seems / To be an overture to verse"), convert Fuller's tedious digress, complain, or make fastidious demands on life, into poignant and entertaining — art. It is good to find strange awake to greet you again. / Fetching the spiced hot milk, finding my highest / Pasture one among the debris of yesterday's pickings. / Rattling that after all it's not you that frightens me" even if "The Life of a place in the brief 'Natural' section. Does it argue an intelligence. / Yet do not let it argue a cunning life. / That's possible."

The "Nature" poems, and the book's end and admirable, with a true exposure of the poet's inner life, with worms, flies, and the like, are

progresses through the guts of the pig, its eggs hatching during the intervals in the innards of the earthworm. "The Autobiography of the Lungworm" is another poem from *Brutus's Orchard*: I feel, though I am simple still the whole is complex; and that life — A huge, doomed throbbing — has a wily soul That must escape the knife.

"Wiriness of soul" might apply to scribe the persistence and energy with which this most modest of poets explores and interprets achievement, to which V.J. Lee's selection from some forty years of Roy Fuller's work does justice.

The Naive Reader

She loved the big old novels;
Jane Eyre's Affair;
the Anatolian travels
of *Captain Matcham*, where
he lost his heart and reason;
Truth and The Brant Season.

She owned several hundred.
They lined up in her room
like caskets to be plundered
for rich words, the perfume
of antique paper and
the sheer weight in her hand.

The scuffed gold of their titles
to her meant country parks
and long family battles.
She knew the complete works
of Mrs Cattermole
as part of her own soul.

Massive, indulgent volumes
invited her to move —
a ghost amid double columns
and passages of love —
in a closed world of fine
feelings and grand design.

Following the ambagious
currents of Gothic prose,
travelling dappled pages,
she relished the brief throes
of fear, anger, desire,
that chance words would inspire.

But some could be confusing:
sculpted by an oak door,
or earnestly perusing
thickets of metaphor,
she sensed she might find meaning,
but for their intervening.

Why, in the bonfire autumn
of *Ellencourt*, did they
trample Sir Harry Portman,
when he fell from his bay?
Why did the comic tutor
betray the milk-girl's suitors?

Why was the Provost angry?
Why did the wild friend ride
from Hampshire to Hungary?
And why was Tom deuced
by Edith Cove, who knew
that all he said was true?

The interloping spirit
that gave each chapter life,
at times she could not bear it:
seeing the Arab knife
flare by the water-butt,
she clasped the plump book shut.

Yet, when she came back later,
there were the frosty church,
the Biffins at the theatre,
long meadows of silver birch
against the sky, that face —
each in its proper place.

For everything was written
and had to be obeyed.
A small part of the pattern,
like Kate or a housemaid,
she knew she must attend
until the very end.

Christopher Isherwood

Children's books

Building a library

Gillian Avery

On March 27, 1982 the Baldwin Library of children's books, which its founder, Ruth Baldwin, had presented to the University of Florida at Gainesville in 1977, was formally dedicated. And in August the three volumes of the catalogue of pre-1900 books (a fourth, dealing with the twentieth century, is in preparation) reached the Bodleian Library, a gift of the University of Florida to the University of Oxford. The library is unique on at least two counts: at 70,000 volumes (40,000 of them dating from before 1900) it must be the largest holding of children's books outside the copyright libraries in the English-speaking world. But more important than mere size is the fact that here for the first time we have a comprehensive assembly of both American and English books, from their first commercial beginning to the present day, making it possible to see in microcosm and from a child-slanted point of view, the fascinating differences in ethic and outlook that have developed between the two societies.

To amass a library on this scale in under thirty years is a stupendous achievement, prompting anyone who has also tried to collect the same sort of book at the same time to wonder how it was done. Wealth can be discounted; many great collections have been put together by men almost too poor to house them securely, and Ruth Baldwin, while perhaps not the classic poor scholar, was a university teacher, dependent on her salary for her purchases, and moreover having to travel to England for a substantial part of them. Nor need one necessarily start with a very strong sense of direction; this very often comes only when one is out in mid-stream. "I confess I never really made a plan," she says in her record of the library's evolution. "I felt from the beginning that it was too late and I was too poor to really build a great library, but I was caught up in the whirlwind." And it is this whirlwind that the record describes, a passionate, driving single-mindedness, of the sort that would make her arrange her classes (she was then teaching at Louisiana State University) so that they began at 7.30 in the morning, allowing her to reach home for the most important moment of the day, the arrival of the mail and the book catalogues.

Her collecting began in 1953 when her parents, who were staying in London, dispatched a parcel of forty chapbooks to her in Illinois. (The fact that her father, Professor Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, the Shakespearean scholar, was himself a collector seems to have held her back rather than



impelled her to become one herself earlier in her career. "Throughout the winter mother sent me more small packages of other old children's books. Most of these were gathered up in the markets or from the barrows in front of the book stores or on Farringdon road opposite the Daily Worker. They were single stories in cloth bindings with little colored pictures pasted on the cover, or older books with leather spines by Holford or Sherwood, with engraved frontispieces and other historical plates with matched books of descriptions. . . . The next year I made slow and timid starts to continue this library on my own." Those first books were all bought in small lots from out-of-the-way junk shops in the United States. On an average she paid half a dollar; a dollar she considered too high; and she always swooped on the "B" books — a discontinued marking which indicated a price of five cents.

By the time of her first visit to England in 1964 she had been collecting for ten years and had put up many hundreds of yards of shelving to accommodate the library on its various moves. She had also begun to prop up her purchasing by selling off duplicates

to university libraries, and it was only the probability of being able to continue doing this that enabled her to buy so boldly from the English dealers. 1964 was the year of her visit to Windermere and H. V. Wilkinson's shop, Book-dealers, far from being the rapacious opportunists that the timid suspect them to be, warm to the enthusiast, and Mr Wilkinson, as other English dealers were to do, treated this customer with generosity. She was allowed to sort out 257 books while other would-be customers banged for admittance on the door, and to carry them away at a price that both she and he knew to be far less than their value. "My library has been made possible by a variety of good breaks, but this was the greatest, except for my parents of course, up to that time."

In 1964 book-buying had only been an incidental part of a holiday. In 1965 she returned in earnest, armed with 90 dollars worth of tickets for 3,000 miles of rail travel. "Finally I was all packed, taking my hard suitcase, all five extra pounds of it, because it was distinctive and also because I could sit on it. I was a little discouraged by the drabness of my suits, but after all I wasn't going on a cruise, and I certainly didn't want to look richer than I was, but I did want to look as though I could pay the bills."



The enduring fascination of *Bluebeard*. On the left is one of Michael Foreman's illustrations to *Sleeping Beauty* and *Other Fairy Tales*, chosen and translated by Angela Carter. (Gollancz. £6.95. 0 575 03194 8). On the right is a picture from Aunt Mavor's Picture Story Book, 1857, which is reproduced in *Favourite Fairy Tales*, edited by Jennifer Mulhern (Granada. £5.95. 0 246 11881 4). Both books are collections of Perrault's fairy tales in modern translation and both will be published on September 30.

Up and down the British Rail network she pounded, visiting places suggested by Mr MacNaughtan, the Edinburgh bookseller, whom she had met the previous year: Brimmell in Hastings, the Andrew Boyle bookshop in Worcester; the MacNaughtans again, her rough calculation was 1,000 books for the first seven days, to be paid for only when she received them in America. "This fall is going to be something I should be keeping track but I can't. . . . Just places and packages." At Wells she bought Mr Heap's entire new catalogue. At Norwich she got a huge haul from Derek Gibbons for only sixty-four dollars. There was also Mr Broadhurst at Southampton, a dealer who first made her buy the books he thought she ought to have before he allowed her to take what she wanted. The last books she bought that year she had to wrap and post herself, using the drawer lining paper she found in her London room since she had run out of the paper and string with which she habitually travelled. "The first six weeks back [home] were ghastly as I had about 15 packages of 1,500 books from about 50 dealers." But what made meeting the bills difficult was the discovery that in fact there were very few duplicates among them to sell.

In those days she bought everything pre-1900 that she was offered, buying in New Orleans and Paris French books that she later sold when she had the chance of acquiring a large Welch collection — books listed in the *Welch Bibliography of American Children's Books* printed prior to 1921. A substantial gift from her parents also went towards it, and this, added to the examples she already had, made the Baldwin Library second only to the American Antiquarian Society in its holdings of early Americana.

She was to visit England for two or three weeks each summer until 1974-5. Prices were going up, many of the dealers had gone, and she had reached a stage when she could do most of her buying from catalogues. There was never any time to check the gaps; nevertheless the holdings for the nineteenth century are remarkably complete. There are no limited editions or manuscripts, nor what might be termed the incunabula of children's books: the emphasis has always been on books that children have read and handled. The library is strong on variants of a single title; there are, for instance, sixty-seven pre-1900 editions of *The Swiss Family Robinson* (including a version done into words of one syllable), on runs of annuals (all bought singly), on early chapbooks, children's tracts, and "toy" books. She brought 40,000 books to Gainesville; since then she has added some 30,000 twentieth-century books, most of these American.

The days of frantically sawing up lengths of timber to accommodate the latest haul are over. The University has housed the benefaction attractively in what was their rare books library, an elegant, galleried room with ample stack space behind. To the English visitor the great novelty may be in comparing the nineteenth-century English and American books and encountering a whole range of authors unknown in this country, and indeed date very little studied in the United States. There are genres that are not found on this side of the Atlantic, like the travelogue books where young Americans embarked on energetic globe-trotting in series such as Horace Scudder's *Bodley books*, Charles Asbury Stephens's *Knockabout Club*, Hezekiah Butterworth's *Zibag Journeys*, and Edward Hale's *Family Flight*. Readers were fed with tidbits about the history and customs of different countries and imbibed a certain amount of the authors' opinions about foreigners. ("What I find particularly telling," continued Barbara in Lizzie Champney's *Three*

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Animals and their homes
provide the theme for this
ingenious cut-out picture book,
in which small children have to
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BODLEY HEAD



Yassar Girls Abroad—the author getting in a couple of hefty swipes in revenge for Mrs Trollope and Dickens—"is the fact that the English are so supercilious. They fancy that they understand us perfectly, while they have not the remotest conception of what Americans really are. I can pardon the arrogance which comes from misconception," remarked Maud, "what I find absolutely incomprehensible is their lack of taste".

The ideal young American of the nineteenth century emerges as something quite different from his English counterpart—tougher, more independent. Children changed as soon as they crossed the Atlantic, as can be seen by comparing Mary Howitt's account of her own Herbert and Meggy in *The Children's Year* (1847) with *Our Cousins in Ohio* (1849) which records the lives of the little nephews and nieces who had

emigrated. "Essence of hoe-handle", the Rev Elijah Kellogg told his boy readers, "if persistently taken two hours a day—or rake-handle, either, especially if there's a shower rising—will cure the most aggravated case of that disgraceful disorder [nerves]".

The American boy was encouraged to make his way in the world; Horatio Alger could reward the diligence of his street urchins with power and riches, while those who wrote similar stories for the English juvenile could never, despite the evidence of self-made men all round them, allow poor boys to rise a worldly inch. Indeed, American boyhood became almost sanctified in the latter decades of the last century, and writers mourned for a lost golden age. "Who", lamented William Allen White, "being recently banished from Boyville, has not sought to return? In vain does he haunt the swimming hole, the water elves will have none of him. He hushes their laughter, muffles their

calls, takes essence from their fun, and leaves it dust upon their lips." In *Peck's Bad Boy and his Pa* (1883) George Peck took it further, he implied that rumbustious boys ought to be carefully cultivated, they turned into the successful men. "Of course all boys are not full of tricks, but the best of them are. That is, those who are readiest to play innocent jokes, and who are continually looking for chances to make Rome howl, are the most apt to be first class business men." England, slow but dogged in taking up American fashion, eventually produced *Just William* in imitation some forty years later. But the basic ethic remained different: nobody suggested that out of William Brown might emerge a great tycoon. In fact there has never been an equivalent of Horatio Alger in England. Those who would like to consider why not, and what England offered in his place, had best study the contents of the Baldwin Library.

Surveying the field

Geoffrey Trease

JOAN AIKEN

The Way to Write for Children
Elm Tree Books. £4.95.
0 241 10746 6

MARGARET R. MARSHALL

An Introduction to the World of Children's Books
Gower Publishing. £9.50.
0 566 03437 9

At first sight Joan Aiken's "complete guide to the basic skills" looks like a manual for Writers' Circles (as indeed it certainly should be) but it is much more than that and it deserves a far wider readership. In this crisp, informative and often witty survey of "the market" she is also giving the customers—teachers, librarians, parents, every one concerned with children's literature of quality—a good general idea of what is available already and of what authors are trying to do. For the busy adult it would be hard to find a quicker, more entertaining way of catching up in a field of knowledge where most are guilty conscious of being always out-of-date.

"Do you want to write about children or for them?" she demands, adopting a civil but no-nonsense tone from the start. She defines the difference and proceeds to the "why". In a scene of exuberant fantasy (and who better at that, as her own stories demonstrate?) she depicts a board of hooded inquisitors interrogating aspirant children's authors on their muddled motives.

While admitting that a good children's book can be enjoyed by many adults, she warns writers to put that out of their minds, for any ambiguity will be reflected in their style, and not only the work itself but its sales and promotion will suffer. Adults and children read in very different ways. Adults start with a background of earlier reading; they have a basis for comparisons, they can respond to allusions. Reading the words, "a garret in Paris", they supply their own mental picture. The child may start with no notion of either Paris or garrets. Like most authors, Joan Aiken deplores arbitrary age-groups, though, as she is giving practical advice, she is herself forced into occasional generalizations, declaring that "children up to the age of thirteen or fourteen are not ready for tragic endings". I wonder, I was much younger than that when I thrilled to the dying Roland and the fading horn at Roncesvalles. And does no child respond to Robin Hood, shooting the arrow to mark his grave?

She certainly recognizes the separate public for the teenage novel, but emphasizes that "every month, every week, between the age of thirteen and twenty can bring a profound difference". No good trying to write for them unless you are a teenager yourself or in constant daily contact with them. "Anybody under twenty regards anybody over twenty-five as having one foot in the grave." She finds these teenagers a rewarding audience, since they have picked up from endless television watching a "lightning

quickness and ability to grasp the stunted ideas", combined with "unshockability, toughness and sophisticated sense of humour". Criteria for writing the novel are reverse of those for the medium group. They are interested in action, but in emotion. No happy ending is taboo, but Miss Aiken, who is responsible as well as realistic, does careful consideration before writing books that shed a glamorous light on sex, drugs or crime. She forms a swing here, as already in *Amie* towards a more conventional mood in such fiction.

On the creative processes she follows a pattern familiar enough to many writers—has any one discovered Kipling's "note and ways of constructing tribal life"? It is well-arranged and pointed and comes fresh to most readers. The development, the building-up of characters, the maintenance of tension, the importance of ending, are all round the Writer's Box (even by signing on one's subconscious as a sort of night-shift) are briefly and firmly dealt with. "Bridge passages" are absolutely essential. Endless television has not spoiled reconciled young readers to lack of front chronological order or "about in time". Miss Aiken knows rich and nourishing vocabulary. In fallacy, she declares, that "unfalsified words will discourage children". Perhaps that depends on the children. Elsewhere she admits to books, competing with television "can't afford to place too many hands in the reader's way". But a tiny inconsistency may be forgiven her, obviously on the side of the angels.

With Margaret Marshall we are another "world of children's books". A much-travelled librarian, teacher, an Eleanor Farjeon and a winner, she must be heard in respect. But whereas Miss Aiken uncompromisingly concerned with artistic quality, Miss Marshall deals with children's literature as "those books to read and prepared for, others to read and to read by children". It highlights the problems of *Stargate* which has four languages and no import books "of little relevance to experience and culture" of its target population. It is natural that, with her own West African and West Indian experience, she should concentrate on such aspects, but it leaves less more general interest—the writing (trends, criteria for selection, and the workings of the book trade—presented in her publisher's blurb. The coverage is sketchy and too often a summary of the self-evident.

For whom is the book really intended? It is set out almost as a textbook form with long lists and numbered paragraphs. Words like "therapeutic" and "cathartic" are kindly explained to us. "Reading interests" are (lest we should be puzzled) "those books or themes which interest children." And the use of photographs "has recently opened up the information book scene". The instruction may be much needed somewhere. But surely "the people who are interested in children and their books" do not still need telling this kind of thing?

Jack-in-the-Box

Jack-in-the-Box is faithful,
Jack-in-the-Box is true,
But Jack-in-the-Box
Is alone in his box
And Jack-in-the-Box wants you.
Jack-in-the-Box is cunning,
Jack-in-the-Box is sly.
Can Jack-in-the-Box
Get out of his box?
Oh Jack-in-the-Box will try.

John Mole

Unearthing the family ghosts

Sarah Hayes

MARGARET MAHY:

The Haunting
Dent. £4.95.
0 460 06097 X

Margaret Mahy has deserved her reputation as queen of the light fantastic with stories and picture-book texts which erupt with delightful visions. Now she displays a darker side in a full-length novel which centres on the possession of one sensitive, but ordinary, small boy.

The last decade has seen the emergence of the "family novel": Margaret Mahy has joined Jan Mark, Madeleine L'Engle and Louise Fitzhugh in writing stories in which parent and sibling relationships are vital and dynamic elements in the plot, not merely background details of the child stars. *The Haunting* manages to combine a realistic approach to family life—in which how you feel about your parents and yourself is actually important—with a strong and terrifying

line in fantasy. The story is built round conversations over family meals which are linked by graphic descriptions of what is going on inside the head of Barney Palmer.

At first Barney thinks he senses the return of his three, long absent, imaginary friends, Mantis, Bigbuzz and Ghost. Then, as the drone in his head forms itself into a child in a blue velvet suit who is so alive that it is Barney who feels unreal, he understands that he is being haunted. The ghost has a message for him: "Barney's dead. And I'm going to be very lonely", it says over and over again. When Barney returns from school to find his sister welcoming him importantly over the threshold with the announcement of the death of a dear relation, Barney faints. It is, in fact, a very frail and elderly great uncle, Barnaby, who has died, releasing the lonely presence in Barney's head. A meeting with the extended family, Great Uncles Alberic and Guy, the terrible Great Granny Scholier reveals a skeleton in the cupboard in the form of a lost Great Uncle Cole who disappeared, feared drowned, as a boy. Before Barney's older sister, the

irrespressible novel-writing Tabitha, can pursue the trail of the black-sheep uncle, Great Granny concentrates all her attention on her great grandson, declaring with sudden sharpness to the assembled family that Barney is "one of the unreliable kind... who make a lot of trouble for others".

Barney's ghostly voice informs him that the "unreliable kind" are Scholar magicians and that Barney himself has inherited the power which runs "like a line of crimson across the world's rainbow". Barney maintains that he is a boy, just a boy, not a magician at all, but the voice knows better: it recognizes the power that emanates from Barney's household, and in any case it will soon be with Barney. The voice falls silent, contenting itself with footsteps that grow louder as the ghost of sinister Uncle Cole approaches Barney to remove him from the family which has no place for him, to join forces and confront the universe. When Barney looks in the mirror, it is Cole's orange owl eyes he sees, not his own.

The novel winds up like a spring which is released suddenly to produce a real-life Uncle Cole prepared to absorb

the normal swings and roundabouts of the family life he missed as a child. His mother, terrible Great Granny Scholier, had feared and hated Cole's power which was so loud and strong where her own had been suppressed and squashed. She had hidden away her strange son, and let everyone think him an idiot. And it turns out that it is not Barney who is the magician, but his taciturn, tormented elder sister, Troy, ecstatic now to have her power freed at last.

What Margaret Mahy has achieved where many have failed is to write a psychological thriller alongside a tale of ghosts and magic. At any twist in the story, it is possible to make a non-fanciful reading and to see Barney's

haunting as the production of an imaginative and fearful mind: he knows that his real mother died when he was born, and now his adored stepmother is pregnant and he fears he may cause her death, too. This neurotic interpretation is delicately suggested, and remains in the wings as the magical production unfolds. The details of dreams and nightmares are notoriously dull in the telling, but Margaret Mahy has a touch as deft as the strange pictures of the mind invade with terrible clarity the ordinary geography of daily life. And the warmth and closeness that underlie the vigorous family dialogues bear no trace of sentimentality: it is possible to believe, for once, that we are such stuff as dreams are made on.

Find a world apart in a FABER book

Helen Cresswell

The Secret World of Polly Flint

Polly Flint was a girl who saw things people couldn't see; once she even saw an angel. And when she came to Yellow in Nottinghamshire she learned of a village that had disappeared hundreds of years before, and slipped the nets of time. To be serialised by Central TV in 1983. Drawings by Shirley Felts. £5.25

Dear Shrink

Oliver Saxon had never thought of himself as specially happy or privileged until he ceased to either, when he and his brother and sister found themselves taken into care by the local authority. A wryly funny novel for older children, by the author of *The Bagpipe Sings*. £5.25

Edited by Robert Fisher

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Drawings by Charles W. Stewart
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ff

Balkan bravura

Alan Brownjohn

JOHN ROWE TOWNSEND

A Foreign Affair
Kestrel. £5.95.
0 7226 5780 3

At a boring party, seventeen-year-old Kate Millbank receives implausible advances from a dashing Ruritanian princeling, Rudi of Essenheim, who is tall, dark, oval-faced and overwhelmingly charming. It is implausible, because Kate herself is short and dumpy, the only child of a one-parent family—her father is a hard-working newspaperman—and studying for her A Levels in Hammersmith; and it reads like a lazily improbable bit of plotting at the very beginning. But John Rowe Townsend has never been at a loss in his novels for ways of giving unlikely events a foundation of credibility, and *A Foreign Affair* shows him putting himself through his own hoops with extravagant dexterity in an absorbingly farcical political comedy.

The "beautiful" Rudi (Kate's adjective for him is just right: this smiling young cavalier is far too good to be true) is the heir to the throne of Essenheim, a principality which has been forgotten by modern history. This is just credible also, as not many of us could swear we know what lies immediately to the east of Switzerland. Essenheim has hardly a hotel; only a meagre wine industry, a one-plane airline, a three-man pop radio station (no television) and one bi-weekly newspaper typeset by hand. Rudi is engaged to be married, to a ten-year-old scion of exiled royalty who has the money Essenheim badly needs. While in England he must not be seen to be furthering any suspicious political schemes, but he can be seen to be chasing young ladies. Hence the interest in Kate, who conveniently possesses the kind of well-built beauty much admired in Essenheim—and would make an acceptable mistress for Rudi while he waits for his ten-year-old fiancée to come of age.

A Foreign Affair manages to be suitably grown-up—even daring—about these sexual matters because of a fine lightness of touch in plot and characterization where other authors would signal the serious themes with heavy solemnity. This is not its only skill. How is Mr Townsend to get Kate to Essenheim with enough of the Essenheimers' rough mountain language to get by? Because she is initially enamoured of Rudi (though we could perhaps do without the "curiously melting" effect of his smile) she takes lessons in it, and is therefore well-equipped for the trip, as well as romantically inclined to it. Rudi suddenly surfaces with an invitation for Kate from his sister Anni, and some pressing political reasons which he does not disclose. At once, they are

on their way, by car via Dover, pursued by secret agents.

The invention of a gloriously archaic and daft foreign country has its fascinations, and John Rowe Townsend has fast-moving fun with them. The original Ruritanian, and the original Rudolf (Rassendyll), had enough Balkan bravura to seem vaguely possible, but this Essenheim hardly ever does. This is comic opera, or even Marx Brothers, terrain, dragged into 1982 with students who are working for degrees in "studieship" (including "active passive resistance"), a guinea-pigging young aristocrat who wants his own exists somewhere between Amin and Tejero, and the designing Herr Pinkel.

Backwards in time

Colin Greenland

DELIA HUDDY

The Humboldt Effect
Julia MacRae. £5.95.
0 86203 043 9

Despite the educational ideals of a handful of writers expert in both sciences, science fiction's principal interest in science is not exposition but piracy. Science is plundered to facilitate a plot or a sensational idea; little attention is given to the tolerances of the original discovery or theory provided it sounds convincing, which usually means authoritatively mystifying.

The latest enabling device for time-travel stories is the tachyon, a subatomic particle which apparently moves faster than light and therefore, relativistically, backwards in time. The tachyon was introduced to sf by Gregory Benford, Professor of Physics at California, who did much of the original work on the elusive effect and then used it to short-circuit causality in his award-winning novel *Timescape*.

Delia Huddy's imaginary Humboldt Effect is a displacement of quantities of tachyons, which generates a local reversal of time in a specially-prepared zone, in this case an area of sea thirty miles off Tel Aviv. The plot of her book concerns Arthur Smith, a scientist who falls overboard from the monitoring submarine. The man the crew pull out of the water, however, is not Arthur but an Israeli from the fourth century ac. The resolution of the mystery depends on the team's capacity to repeat the experiment exactly, and Arthur's ability, washed up on a deserted beach, to deduce where he is and when, and what he must do about it.

Both these conditions are swiftly and efficiently fulfilled, which rather

minimizes their interest. The Humboldt Effect is repeated after three days without a hitch, and Arthur's first guess is the right one. It requires him to work out the identity of the survivor rescued by the submarine; but since we are given no prior hint that his identity would mean anything at all, to Arthur or to us, this revelation is parenthetical. Indeed, it is not clear where Huddy expects the repeal of her book to lie. Certainly not in the Effect itself, for though her research provides her with some impressive techniques and equipment, she deploys them in a referential way, without explanation. Her sop to science and the enquiring adolescent reader is, inevitably, a lecture on tachyons; but the theory is muddled and the lecture perfunctory. Huddy saves herself from having to probe further by electing a viewpoint character who knows no physics and falls asleep halfway through. She uses most of the major characters as viewpoint at one time or another, even those in whom she is plainly uninterested, which makes unconvincing reading. It is obvious that character, or at least psychology, is her main concern, the primary subject being Arthur Smith's best friend Luke Crantock, leader of the team and bearer of an unsuspected torch for Arthur's wife Mary.

The plot as described above takes place within some sixty pages; the remaining ninety-odd describe Luke's anxieties (and Mary's, and others') before and after. They plague themselves with questions. These are not the creative questions of growing up, which they were in the preceding volume *Time Piper*. Luke, barely in his twenties, seems prematurely middle-aged. He thinks his lucky stars, cries "Strewth!" and tells people to take a running jump. His colleagues are well-to-do or matter-of-fact, get the jimjams or another feather in their caps. Tachyons or no, this is old-fashioned

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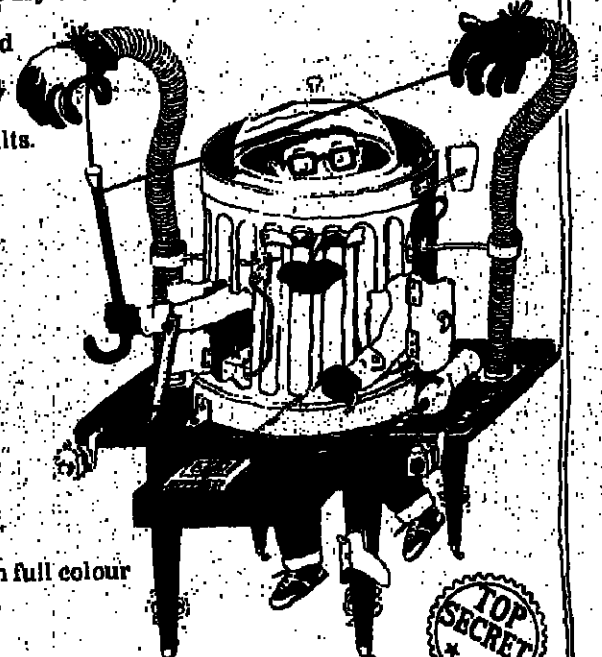
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Margery Fisher, *The Sunday Times*

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The kingdoms of the intellect

Redmond O'Hanlon

PETER WARD

The Adventures of Charles Darwin
Illustrated by Annabel Large
Cambridge University Press. £3.95.
0 521 24510 9

In excessive conformity to the cruder expectations of the laws of natural and sexual selection, the natives of Tierra del Fuego, when short of food in a hard winter, as Darwin tells us in the second edition of the *Journal of Researches* (1845), "kill and devour their old women before they kill their dogs".

In the unanswerable logic of a local boy this is because "Doggies catch others, old women no." And he also documents "the manner in which they are killed by being held over smoke and then choked; he imitated their screams as a joke, and described the part of their bodies which are considered best to eat." Darwin felt that "Horrid as such a death by the hands of their friends and relatives must be, the fears of the old women, when hunger begins to press, are more painful to think of; we were told that they then often run away into the mountains, but that they are pursued by the men and brought back to the slaughter-house at their own firesides!"

The fictional hero of Peter Ward's book, George Carter cabin-boy on HMS Beagle ("You will never have heard of me. To be honest I am no-one special, yet I know of tales to make a person's hair stand on end") feels free to tell his nine to twelve-year-old audience all about it in his own words, but, probably quite rightly, decides to keep to himself the story of the small Fuegian boy who, dropping a basket of sea-eggs, had his brains beaten out by his father against the rocks.

But then Darwin himself is as perfect a father-figure as anyone could wish. And George, his inseparable small companion, having taught the great man how to get into a hammock without immediately coming out again,

learns many equally precious secrets in return.

"Dust, George! Dust! Think of it!" shouts Darwin, three hundred miles out from the coast of Africa. "Why, sir," cries George, "I dusted your cabin only last night." Yet this is no ordinary housekeeping kind of dust, but the clouds of particles which another, rather better-known young voyager "looked particularly after" in passing the Cap de Verd fifteen years later. T. H. Huxley on HMS Rattlesnake, describes "the dust mentioned by Darwin", the fine cargo of the high atmospheric winds, containing, among the gravity sieved soil and powdered rock, spores of African and (as Darwin correctly thought) South American plants, the potential colonizers of newly-raised islands.

George misses the ceremonial shaving of initiates as the Equator is crossed, hiding out in a snail locker on the sensible premise that he has nothing to shave; but he helps to quell a revolution, comes under fire from a Buenos Aires gunship ("A cannonball flew straight for my head! Desperately clinging to the yardarm, I ducked just as the missile passed over"), and, temporarily deserting ship to ride with Mr Harris and Darwin across the pampas, is spirited away by a gaucho on a private puna-hunting expedition and attacked by Indians. The eyeballs a rhea in a redbud ("The bird hissed horribly at me as I fell backwards in flight, it flapped its wings, and aimed one foot in my direction"), usurps the place of Spyns Covington ("Fiddler and boy to the pump cabin"), Darwin's actual servant, on the expedition to Punta Alta, where the gigantic bones of the extinct armadillo-like *Mylodon darwini*, the Megalonyx and the Toxodon were an unpraised bed of sand and gravel and shells; and he is caught in the 1834 Valdivia earthquake.

This literal and conceptual shaking of mind and body ("Now I began to understand the words of Mr Darwin when he told me of the power of the earth below, which can twist and change the surface") makes (George, as

it did Darwin himself, a man and Alfred Russel Wallace on the island of Ternate in the Archipelago,

was a very slight one... I awoke at gun-fire (5 a.m.) and shrank as if an army of men were gulling over it, and I was for an instant I imagined myself in New Guinea, in my first book, which shook when an old man roared on the shore, remembering that I was now solid earthen floor, I said to myself, "Why, it's an earthquake."

George Carter rides a tortoise on the Galapagos and encounters a crab on the island; he witnesses most of Darwin's recorded moments of Creation (and slavery); speaks of his life as Able Seaman, one of his friend's books, *The Species*, in a Plymouth bookshop; learns that "this Darwin fellow created a dreadful rumour, my father has turned the whole world upside down and has made enormous circles." And this little book is an excellent introduction for readers to that dreadful rumour.

Annabel Large's bold illustrations are as good as the text, and the time in Down House which Darwin as an anonymous person, a fellow student at Cambridge, he later discovered to be his friend (herbert) is particularly good. The actual instrument on the wall was a smaller, portable instrument lower power - but no matter, a funnel-like enclosure of brass, slidable and its mirror let brackets to a brass column to descend to a primitive wooden desk. It is like Balzac's collection of instruments, it is as if, staring at its image for long enough, the thoughts which long ago the now-quietest eye might like to pretend that you are. You may adapt your behaviour to fit the stereotype in the books.

This danger is most obviously relevant to the book by Peter Mayle and Arthur Robins. It is a real question who this book is meant to be for. Internal evidence suggests that it is designed ostensibly for six or seven-year-olds, readers, but not very fluent readers, who prefer large print and a lot of pictures. The sexual advice, too, is geared to those whose problems with the opposite sex are confined to questions about how to avoid spending

Handing out good advice

Mary Warnock

PETER MAYLE and ARTHUR ROBINS

Grown-ups and Other Problems
Macmillan. £4.95.
0 333 32601 6

MIRIAM STOPPARD

Talking Sex
Collins. £4.95.
0 575 03150 6
Pico paperback £1.25.
0 330 26752 3

BILL STEWART

You and All the Others
Kestrel. £4.95.
0 7226 5689 0

These three books are all designed to give good advice. But how does one publish a book of advice? How can advice be made to do for everyone? In questions of personal relationships, the advice may seem never to be quite or even nearly applicable to the individual. On such questions, advice must come to people one by one, after the whole complicated saga has been told. Who does not think herself unique, not a type or specimen, like everyone else? It is this conviction that explains the popularity of agony columns. We read them out of curiosity, to find out what other people are like. If the problem and its solution seem to have some reference to ourselves, then this is, itself, a private matter to be decided by ourselves. We are not being type-cast.

It could be argued, then, that all these books, and others like them, are a waste of time and money; indeed they may be thought positively harmful. For even if you feel you are not the person to whom the advice is offered, you may like to pretend that you are. You may adapt your behaviour to fit the stereotype in the books.

This danger is most obviously relevant to the book by Peter Mayle and Arthur Robins. It is a real question who this book is meant to be for. Internal evidence suggests that it is designed ostensibly for six or seven-year-olds, readers, but not very fluent readers, who prefer large print and a lot of pictures. The sexual advice, too, is geared to those whose problems with the opposite sex are confined to questions about how to avoid spending

time in their company. I can remember, at a slightly more advanced age, pretending to be pretty, jolly tomboy girls of Angela Brazil, or Dorita Fairlie Bruce, *Dinsie a Prefect*, the *Madcap of the Fourth* and so on. So I can imagine children playing the role of the jokey, though anonymous, "kids" in the Mayle and Robins gallery; plotting against grown-ups, seeing through their stratagems, exploiting them, playing one off against the other: "The nearest sources of money are your parents. They get it by working for it, and they probably give you a little each week to buy vital supplies like ice-cream and comics. But for real money - the kind that buys bicycles - you can't expect them to pay up without giving them a nudge in the right direction." There follows a list of ways in which the nudge may be administered. The basic dishonesty of the book is that, if you did try to be like these knowing children, you would in fact be playing the grown-ups' game. The book is written by them, and for them. Just as the *Madcap of the Fourth* turned out in the end to be the saviour of the honour of the school, so these odious uppity children will turn out to be the saviours of middle class conformism; and that is the purpose of the book. I seriously doubt, moreover, whether six-year-olds would find it funny. Children of that age are not able to be sufficiently detached from their own lives to think of themselves as members of a class or kind. If they love stories, it is because they identify the characters with themselves or imagine what it would be like to be that individual person. They are not yet even amateur or part-time sociologists.

The teenagers for whom the other two books are designed are certainly capable of identifying with their age-group, and the problems are real enough. Miriam Stoppard's book has the great advantage of a perfectly explicit title. It is, and is meant to be, primarily about sex. It has good, clear anatomical drawings, and even in the other pictures the people look human. She starts with the questionnaire she sent out to a number of teenagers, and she quotes extensively from their answers. There is therefore the reassuring sense that what she says comes as much from her potential readership as from herself. It is easily imaginable that teenagers will read this book; and even if they come from their contemporaries that they have done so, they will secretly feel that (for the handicapped too are human) the value-judgments are cautious, but not too cautious; and at the same time the intense potential pleasures of sex are

not played down. Perhaps she underestimates the factor of embarrassment in talking about sex. It may be that teenagers want to; but, for many, the appropriate, non-sniggering vocabulary is missing. Their parents, too, whom on the whole, Dr Stoppard is inclined to castigate for their reticence, may be more inhibited than she allows by the general sense that they are likely to be thought bossy and disapproving, even where that is not their intention. Also parents may be plagued by the question when to talk about sex; and this partly means how old should their children be when they talk, partly whether it should be over breakfast, or in some special setting... thus, on the one hand risking interruption just at the interesting bit, on the other, the atmosphere of the dreaded "private speak". Again perhaps she says too little about those hapless teenagers, not so few, whose problem is not how to manage their sexual experiences but how to manage the lack of them. The dreadful fear that they are too unattractive ever to get involved in any such thing, the absolute need, indeed, to be "attractive", these are not much discussed. There are, after all, tremendous pressures, not just from contemporaries (she talks of the competition) but from advertising, comics, sex-shops, pornographic videos, pop music, indeed the whole atmosphere of urban life. Nevertheless, even though it has omissions, it is a good, educative and kindly book.

Bill Stewart's book which is also kindly-disposed, covers the same ground. But it is so patronizing, so deliberately down-market, so careful to make no social assumptions that might offend, that the end result is to destroy confidence. The cover has a picture of an astonishingly ugly girl with a bottle of coke and an overturned plastic cup beside her to show that you and I too can have a lovely time at the Youth Club and the illustrative parable of the girl on her first evening in the new district where she has come to live is nothing if not fast-moving, love at first sight (and all). The discussion of the main emotions likely to upset personal relations (the four Morsiers) is naive and simplistic; there are some dogmatic assertions about infantile sexuality. It is, in short, a book to arouse all possible critical hackles. Perhaps there are people ignorant and innocent enough to find it useful; but it carries with it the unmistakable air of a lecture to the mentally handicapped - nice, kind, sympathetic, (for the handicapped too are human) but not, I suspect, of much appeal to the teenager who has got beyond the birds and the bees.

Young scientists

F. W. Kellaway

PHILIP WATSON

Liquid Magic
0 416 24230 8
Light Fantastic
0 416 24240 5
Methuen/Walker. £3.95 each.

The enquiring mind of the primary school aged child takes a lot of satisfying. As Stevenson had it: "The world is so full of a number of things". Books which help to answer some of the everlasting questions of the young about the wonderful things around them are therefore always a boon. In a particularly lively series of titles under a "Science Club" umbrella, two which deal with light and liquids offer a surprisingly large amount of accurate information (two more on air and motion are published at the end of this month). More important, that information is often deduced from simple experimentation by the young readers themselves, rather than being set out didactically.

In the second book there are considerations of reflection and refraction, the spectrum and photography, and of light and energy. Technical terms are not dodged and, while attenuated definitions or explanations sometimes fail to suggest, let alone convey, the complete story, there is little that is misleading, or that might need to be unlearned when a later, more academic, scientific study is undertaken.

The "things to do" are sensibly selected, with instructions logically set out and including just about the right amount of guidance. Especially to be commended are the safety precautions contained in the notes (they appear fittingly in both books) on "laboratory procedure". Dangers and the need for cleanliness and tidiness, are properly emphasized.

But it is the application of inductive processes that has a special appeal. It is indeed arguable that it would be advantageous for this technique to be employed even more frequently. Sometimes, of course, it is necessary to tell the young reader what to look for, or what to expect to happen; more helpfully, the briefing for an experiment is detailed, but with the operator left to observe and deduce results. As an instance there is the

treatment of colour: advice on constructing a "whizzer wheel" (a disc in which segments are painted in the colours of the rainbow and spun to give the impression of white light) is followed by suitable associations of the primary red, green and blue to produce the secondary yellow, magenta and cyan, and then by the concept of filters. The reader is involved throughout in making and doing things, rather than just being told certain facts.

Similarly in the book about liquids there are simple but effective experiments involving, for example, surface tension and crystallography. In the former a "silver skier", made from aluminium foil, is placed upon water on to which a drop of washing-up liquid is placed and we are shown what happens. Then programmes for "growing" crystals introduce the well-known patterns and also include a recipe for making sugar-candy, in "a delicious experiment because you can eat the result". A chapter, "liquids to gas", on change of state brings in ideas of enzymes, bread-making and brewing; other sections cover osmosis, thermometry, preparing ice-llies, flotation and the chemistry of acids and alkalis. Throughout, the step-by-step instructions, with clear coloured illustrations, encourage participation, perception and inference. Inevitably, with such a wide range of topics in each forty-eight-page book, something has to be sacrificed. The science must be pruned to essentials related to the suggested practical exercises, with most ramifications omitted. Paradoxically, this could be one of the strengths of the series. The works are not intended to be textbooks, nor even school primers (though they might be eminently appropriate in a junior class). They are not written for adults. They are designed, and most successfully, to appeal to individual youngsters, or a few companions, who wish to enjoy themselves in an active way.

The Schools' Poetry Association has recently been formed in order to "support and promote the teaching of poetry in schools". A small advisory panel has been set up and the Association aims to produce a journal with reviews and articles, to publish teaching materials and to organize local poetry festivals and conferences. Details are available from David Orme, The Secretary, Schools' Poetry Association, c/o Twyford School, Winchester, Hants SO21 1NW.

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School songs

Alan Blackwood

R. A. SMITH

Blue Bell Hill Games
Illustrated by David McKee
Kestrel. £4.95.
0 7226 5726 9

SYLVIA BARRATT and SHEENA HODGE

Tinder-Box: Sixty-six songs for children
A. and C. Black. £3.95.
0 7136 2170 2

Probably the most fruitful source of folk song and dance in Britain today is wherever else children gather to play their own games. Radio, cinema, television, discs, cassettes, all the changes of the last twenty-five years none of these things seem to have impinged much, if at all, upon the traditional world of children's games, the ritualized rhymes, chants and incantations, often in the form of inspired doggerel ("Benjie mackeracker"), the jumps, hops and runs that go with such simple apparatus as a skipping rope or a piece of chalk.

The rhymes and phrases, tunes and our turn, keep them alive, help to change them, re-create them in a thought or plan. It is the very essence of folk activity.

The compiler of *Blue Bell Hill Games* has named his book after the head teacher. He has followed in the footsteps of Bela Bartok, Cecil Sharp of Devonshire and the wilds of Cotswolds, but simply by stepping into recording the songs of his young people. It is a most entertaining record.

he has set down, categorizing their games (skipping, two-ball, clapping games, and so on), summarizing how they are played, setting down their verses and chants, sometimes notating their musical refrains. The pages are made more lively still with jaunty little drawings by David McKee that have a real playground feel about them. Attractive as it may be, I doubt if many children themselves will bother with the book. They, in a sense, are its true authors, and their interest is in playing the games, living them for the moment, not considering them as you might a collection of butterflies pinned to a board. For sociologists on the other hand, such a compilation will be meat and drink.

Of more practical value is *Tinder-Box*, a varied collection of over sixty

children's songs, drawn from all parts of the world, some taken from some specifically composed. These arrangements, sometimes with separate melody line, are simple. These are supplemented by chord signs for budding guitarists, a quick guide to basic finger positions, and many hints and suggestions on how each song can include other instruments, such as recorder, drums, xylophone, tambourine. One song demonstrates how hands and feet can be used to enliven the performance. The book is primarily addressed to teachers. It has large, easy-to-read landscape-format pages, bound in a soft but strong cover. A useful book this, for the junior school or play room.

Cornish

For Lyn

The last message to come in
Was a rumouring over the wires
Of fences down on an inland farm;
Add a girl carrying a lamp upstairs
Had seen a light far out, too far,
Winking back in answer.

Next morning, it was gone.
But not a breath of breeze would stir
The mild, salt-stiffened air,
Or flutter the handkerchieves held up by women
Who came out slowly in the stupid calm
With tiny flags drooping from one arm.
Uncertain if they'd won
Or if now, they could surrender.

Alan Jenkins

The voice of the street

George Szirtes

WES MAGEE

All the Day Through
Evans. £4.95.
0 237 45597 8

Arguably the finest of anthologists this century was Walter de la Mare, a poet who is conspicuously missing from Wes Magee's *All the Day Through*. Conspicuously for this reader, that is, for whom *Peacock Pie* is a most superior collection of children's poems. But since reviews of anthologies are notoriously restricted to quibbling about omissions of a particular nature I will refrain from making too much noise about individual poems. There is, however, a point to be made about the tone of an anthology, and recently there has been a tendency for children's verse to carry the air of the street rather than the Hundred Acre Wood. This to some extent is to the good in that it concentrates on the colloquial and the immediate. When written by Kit Wright it is excellently readable. It is funny, true and rhythmically memorable; furthermore it has a stream of innocence running beneath it that is wholly convincing. In lesser hands the "street" genre declines to an affect acceptance of madness, the of mere appearances, and childish parenolia. What runs beneath

this is a pop-Rousseauistic premise that the kids are all right and everyone else isn't.

All the Day Through, which gives us best and worst (not quite enough of the best in my opinion), is a thematic anthology in that it traces a child's day from waking and breakfast, through school, the afternoon and evening, to night with its ghouls and ghosts. Most poems do share the concept of the child as the much-put-upon noble savage. The book starts with "I woke up this morning" by Karla Kuakin which concentrates on the plight of the dear one as he faces the cruel impatience of the adult world. Brian Lee's "Bad dog" has the child yearning for the thrill of mud and blood enjoyed by his lost dog while adults merely threaten the errant bound with slow starvation. Gareth Owen's working-class schoolboy articulates his alienation in "Our school". There is something po-faced in these poems which becomes the mirror image of old-fashioned improving verse.

Then there are the celebrations of normality which is fair enough if limited. "Drinking fountain" observes the fact that in public parks drinking fountains tend either to shoot up your nose or lie doggo. "What do you think?" by Wes Magee himself is a five-verse list of things people collect. There are nonsense poems which like fireworks sometimes fail to go off (Ted Hughes's "My sister Jane" among them). My obituary sneaks about some poems here and there from the conviction

that adults pretending to be children tend to look more pedantic than childlike.

However there are worthwhile things as well, which, on the whole, tend to look and sound more like poetry. The anonymous playground chants certainly deserve a place here, and some excellent poems have wandered in from the adult world: Vernon Scamell's "The Apple-raid", Alan Brownjohn's "The Parrot" on a different level, R. S. Thomas's "The morning" by Karla Kuakin which concentrates on the plight of the dear one as he faces the cruel impatience of the adult world. Brian Lee's "Bad dog" has the child yearning for the thrill of mud and blood enjoyed by his lost dog while adults merely threaten the errant bound with slow starvation. Gareth Owen's working-class schoolboy articulates his alienation in "Our school". There is something po-faced in these poems which becomes the mirror image of old-fashioned improving verse.

One distracting aspect of the book is the setting of the text in light and round sans-serifs which are very difficult to read. I take the point that these are the sort of letters teachers write on the blackboard, but not as small as this nor so close together. Next to the heavy ink illustrations the poem text bubbles off like clusters of tiny faint bubbles. This is one assurance, a school's anthology and will have most effect when read aloud to a class, as Mr Magee, who is both a poet and a headmaster, will have intended.

KIDS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Frances Hawker and Bruce Campbell

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International images and a sense of style

Julia Briggs

O. BOZEJOVSKY and
V. RAWENOFF

Modern European Children's Book
Illustrators
120pp, with over 200 illustrations.
Bohem/Hutchinson. £20.
0 09 149350 1

This can be seen as the outcome of a series of developments in book production which, after ousting the illustrators from adult fiction, then proceeded to replace their work in non-fiction with photography. By the 1920s and 1930s only the most successful were commissioned to work on major classics; competent minor ones, such as Norman Ault or H. R. Millar, either packed up altogether or were reduced to working on school texts or ephemera: *A First Book of Physics* or *Ethel's Summer Term at St Hildergard's*. But after the war, improvements in colour-reproduction processes, as well as the growth of an international market for children's books whose minimal texts eased translation problems, encouraged a number of artists to turn to children's books as a means of self-expression; these not only provided a convenient show-case for their work, but more recently have offered some guarantee of dissemination over Europe. Artists have learnt to express their

personalities and private visions in terms of this medium, and while they have frequently sought to capture the simplicity, force and drama of children's own artwork, they have paid rather less attention to children's tastes.

Do children like large picture books, or is it we, as parents, teachers and librarians, who have created the market for them? Small children certainly like big books – up to a point, the bigger the better. The original large-format *Babar* books, whose detailed panoramas seemed almost big enough to climb into, certainly fascinated my own generation, as did the folio-size Country Life editions of *Orlando*. Yet both provided story-lines that held, in their different ways, the comic and unusual in a peculiarly happy balance with the familiar and secure – all the more effectively since, forming a series, familiar characters continued their adventures from one volume to the next. To the trained eye, the pictures of Jean de Brunhoff and Kathleen Hale might appear amusingly stylized, but to the child they were satisfyingly informative, precise and solid.

Unintended by the Disney studio, they were nevertheless genuine colour pictures, and as such quite distinct from the line illustrations, with colour tints or blocks in, that characterized most of the work of their predecessors – Crane and Caldecott, Beatrix Potter and Ernest Shepard. Even today the earlier *Babar* and *Orlando* books look fresh and original, and few artists either in this collection or out of it can rival their clarity and confidence.

In any case, *Modern European Children's Book Illustrators* would probably not be the most satisfactory place to begin a search for the major

illustrating talents of today, though as a reference book, or a guide to current styles, it certainly does not lack interest. Some fifty or so artists are presented, each accorded two pages of illustration, accompanied by their own photograph and some minimal details of age and place of training. They come from all over Western Europe, but exactly how they were selected remains somewhat mysterious, nor is this clarified by the editor's preface (thoughtfully translated into German, English, French, Spanish and Italian), which voices various pious platitudes concerning the publisher's responsibilities to the young and to the talented. In accordance with these principles, the artists published by the Swiss firm of Bohem, the catalogue's producer, are naturally well-represented, making up almost a fifth of the total number. More puzzling, then, is how the others were chosen. Though the preface describes them as contemporary, one (Ruth Knorr) is dead, while the others range from a total newcomer, Manuela Barcelor (here described as born in 1963), to such well-established figures as Lilo Fromm, Janosch, Emanuele Luzzati and Reiner Zimmik. There is no attempt to be representative: from Holland, there is Max Velthuis, but not the more familiar and influential Dick Bruna. In the case of English artists, the choice looks distinctly arbitrary: Brian Wildsmith is included but not Victor Ambrus, Tony Ross but not Quentin Blake, David McKee but not Jan Pienkowski. Nor does the choice of work displayed always seem very discriminating: in the cases of David McKee and Brian Wildsmith, for example, three out of the four illustrations reproduced are taken from one book, and two of those from Wildsmith's *The Circus* are distinctly

similar. This is all the more true since the bibliography at the back lists those books from the Bohem lists of which much space is taken by lists of each artist's various European publishers, perhaps an indication the market the book is aimed at.

Despite the wide range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds here represented, in the final analysis the similarities of the work are more striking than the differences, as if there is a Euro-style, in the colour-effects predominant. The discussion of the subject by *Centuries of Children's Books* Europe Bettina Hörlmann, in this style as "a leaning towards a more restrained, more formal, more intentional naivety, reminiscent of paintings of modern primitivism". Though a number of artists are of high individuality, these are commonly taken the form of pastiches or of the Douanier Rousseau, difficult to resist the editor's challenge to select from his pages past-war artists who many would regard as the heirs of Ruckhuck and Nielsen. By his favourites are the French *Le Prince* (whose version of *The Prince* came out last year), the Dutch Jutta Mirtchin (not yet published here), Swedish Jan Mogens and Swiss Jörg Müller (beautifully illustrated by a certain *duch*). But part of the book's attraction is its invitation to make up your own mind about the various artists it introduces.

Comedy of non-communication

Richard Combs

Moonlighting
Various cinemas

In the last two years, a veritable flood of films has reached the West from Poland, if not exactly exposing, then commenting by metaphor and allegory, on the troubled state of that nation. *Moonlighting* is an example of the kind of work by a Polish film-maker which has previously been more familiar on this side of Europe – an émigré's cinema, usually the cinema of the fantastic, as represented primarily by the work of Walerian Borowczyk and Roman Polanski. The director of *Moonlighting*, Jerzy Skolimowski, was actually a fellow alumnus with Polanski at the state film school, and collaborated on the screenplay of Polanski's only Polish feature, *Knife in the Water*. Skolimowski for a while was more productive in his native country, until he rubbed Stalinist sensibilities the wrong way in one film, *Hands Up!*, since then he has been just as peripatetic as Polanski and his work far more eclectic. The surrealist quirks of humour which they share have not kept Skolimowski towards the horror genre, but to film-making of a constant sizzling wit and restlessness, as if afraid to sink its roots into any soil or convention.

But in *Moonlighting*, the émigré's cinema comes home, as it were, or absorbs the Polish crisis in its own way, very different from Andrzej Walda's political parables *Man of Marble* and *Man of Iron*. It is, for instance, a film which never sees Poland, or only in the most comically displaced fashion. At the very beginning, a Lot airline girl announces a departure to London in both Polish and English. Four men are leaving, builders, led by Nowak (Jeremy Irons), the only English-speaker among them, who moments later shepherds them nervously through an equally emblematic London airport with a well-rehearsed story about coming to buy a second-hand car. In fact they have come, illegally, to work: to restore a Kensington house bought by their

mysterious "boss", which will net them a year's salary for a month's work and refurbish his property at far less than going London rates.

The problem for the quartet is that they are not only strangers in a strange land, but underground men, living in primitive conditions in the gutted house, working in secret, and with scarcely enough in expenses to keep themselves and pay for the renovations. They also become inmates of a kind, as Nowak imposes an ever stricter régime in order to stretch their resources. The final complication is what happens in Poland. Through the papers, Nowak learns of the crackdown against Solidarity and the declaration of martial law. He decides not to tell his compatriots, for fear of what it would do to morale, and this deception forces him to become an even more watchful goaler. Meanwhile, their financial situation has declined to the point where Nowak is driven to pilfer from the local supermarket. Repressive gauleiter on the one hand, urban guerrilla on the other – Nowak could easily be read as a metaphor for Poland

politically and economically in extremis. The funny thing about *Moonlighting*, however, is that it refuses to obey the rules for metaphor. The local scene, for instance, cannot be translated easily into a global one. The characters of the four men (particularly the doleful Irons, a splendid study in slow-burning despair) are as emblematic in their way as the Polish airport. But they are also very concrete – as much so, in fact, as the work they are engaged in or the elaborate system Nowak devises for shoplifting. Skolimowski, it seems, remains firmly in exile while dreaming of home – even when that dream has been turned into a nightmare by what Nowak reads in the newspaper or, in a scene of remote and peculiar shock, by the multiple images of tanks in Warsaw streets which he watches, soundless, on TV sets in a shop window.

Moonlighting may be "about" Poland, Solidarity and the military takeover, about the political consequences of personal behaviour. But the impact of its story, certainly the core of its black and painfully exact

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In the name of religion

C. H. Sisson

CHARLES CAUSLEY
The Sun, Dancing: Christian Verse Illustrated by Charles Keeping
Kestrel, £6.95.
0 7226 5593 2

The author of the marvellous *Ballad for Katherine of Aragon* is a likely editor for a popular anthology. Given, as here, handsome production, with large type on good paper, and illustrations by Charles Keeping, the publishers could be confident that they had an attractive book to offer. There are already the *Furbin Books of Magic Verse* and *Self-See Verse*, by the same editor, to blaze a trail.

An anthology of Christian verse raises more complicated questions than its predecessors – problems which both Elizabeth Jennings and Donald Davie have recently wrestled with. Magic and the salt sea allow a more careful approach. If only because magicians and sailors are unlikely to ask awkward questions whereas there are always niggers in the Christian

camp. Charles Causley has written an introduction, where we may look for an explanation of how he has viewed his task. There are some words about "religion as that which represents the link between man and God, and the gods", and about "all creative activity in the arts being 'essentially religious in origin'". One suspects that the latter notion has more to do with current romantic myths of creativity than with religion. Be that as it may, we are told that *The Sun, Dancing* "is confined simply to a particular segment of religious belief... a Christian standpoint... a Christian point of view". We had understood that from the subtitle, let it mean what it will. The truth is that the anthology is "an entirely personal choice", and that is all there is to it.

The publishers talk bravely about "the range of religious verse produced over almost a thousand years", but no one should go to this anthology for enlightenment about the history of the subject. It is a mixed bag, with a heavy emphasis on the twentieth century. There are eight poems by John Heath-Stubbs, who is certainly theologically instructed; five by the editor himself; three by Karen Gershon; Eleanor

Farjeon, W. H. Davies, Gey Muckey Brown, Walter de la Mare, John Masefield and Ted Hughes among those who have two poems while three with only one name include Hardy, Roy Campbell, Jack Clegg, Fleur Baile, T. S. Eliot, G. K. Chesterton and Howard Nemerov. The piece from Eliot is a rather peculiar bit of dialogue from *Murder in the Cathedral*. The treatment of religious centuries could only be called idiosyncratic and erratic. Some of the best poems are by poets from Langland, in whom there is not altogether successful modern version.

If this curious mixture of good and not-so-good verse has a general tone, other than that set by the poets' personal likes and dislikes, it is to publishers suggest that of more suitable for "religious education" classes, school assemblies, youth clubs and all kinds of group work and worship. Most of it seems to be somewhat marginal, if not peripheral, but all kinds of funny things go on. Causley is well qualified to teach a teacher might want to dip into it, but taught in Church schools for the last five years.

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Dearth of a salesman

Harold Hobson

CLIFFORD ODETS
Rocket to the Moon
Hampstead Theatre

This production of *Rocket to the Moon* is the second which the play has received in this country. It was originally written at a very awkward period of Odets' career, and presented in New York in 1938. Odets at that time was beginning to lose interest in social commitment and to turn to plays about the problems of individuals. This disappointed his most fervent admirers, including the first director of the play, the admirable and conscientious Harold Clapham.

Certainly there is little in the characters of *Rocket to the Moon* to admire or to sympathize with. Most of them are dentists, and clearly dentists are a gloomy lot of self-pitying weaklings, much given to moaning that they cannot make up their minds, or keep sober, or find customers, or desert their wives and give their secretaries a real swinging night out at the Planetarium. All this is very upsetting to Dr Stark (David Burke), who is a mild, well-meaning fellow wanting only to jog along in a placid sort of way, without much excitement, but without dishonour, either. Nor are his nerves settled by the frequent incursions into his physically and psychologically smothering surgery of his neighbour, practitioner who can neither get a patient nor exercise patience, and who, in Harold Clapham's fine performance, rails with

a rasping rhetoric against both what the universe gives, and those who, like himself, haven't got what it takes. What with the heat and Dr Stark's fascination for women, the shouters and the failures, it is not surprising that before long Dr Stark's surgery becomes a psychiatric parlour, and then, after two interminable acts of breast-beating and groaning, courage, optimism and cheerfulness flood upon the stage. It is nothing less than a miracle, and it is brought about by a travelling salesman, played with magnificent, unsuspecting heroism by Laurence Naismith. Thirty times in one day he has failed to get a single order. Yet he comes up fresh, resilient, and full of hope. And when he has failed for the thirty-first time his thought is not of himself, but of his wife, who is waiting for him at home. "A wonderful woman," he says, still smiling, as he goes out. After he has left the stage there is a moment's silence. Then Dr Stark's voice rings out: "Whatever it is we are looking for in our lives, that man has it."

Now anyone who sees the Hampstead production will protest that there is no salesman in the play; and alas there is no Laurence Naismith either. They will be right in their protest. There is a mystery about *Rocket to the Moon*, which no one at Hampstead is at all clear about. In the original 1938 cast-list of the play there is indeed a salesman, but he has no lines to say. In a London production ten years later there occurred the splendid scene and performance I have just described. David Aldin, the

manager of the Hampstead Theatre, did not see it, being only six years old at the time. And now the scene, which was incomparably the best thing in the play, has disappeared, and no one seems to know where it has gone to. We are left with a morbid indulgence in self-pity and remorse, and the inspiration that was in the play at one time is left out. The matter is all the more mysterious because Clapham, supposed to have said that the play needed more hope. Possibly Odets was perturbed against his will during the New York run of the play to give to the salesman lines which he subsequently cut out when Clapham wasn't looking. But in that case how did they get to London in 1948?

Clapham also felt that too much importance was being given to Dr Stark's secretary, Cleo. Certainly this is true of the Hampstead production. Mary Maddox's Cleo is an immature feld, exceedingly tiresome, infinitely tedious, with the voice of a talking doll, the brains of a parrot, and the emotional force of Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm. It is only fair to say that Miss Maddox's performance has been warmly praised by other critics. For myself I greatly preferred the sensible, intelligent, and sensitive performance by John Woodvine of Dr Stark's secretary. There is a very stylish No. 6 safe within a hundred miles of the humorous and lecherous old gentleman, who wields a walking-cane like a rapier. Those who have seen Mr Woodvine only in rumbustious character parts would never guess that he has so much panache. But then, of course, he is not playing a dentist.

commentary

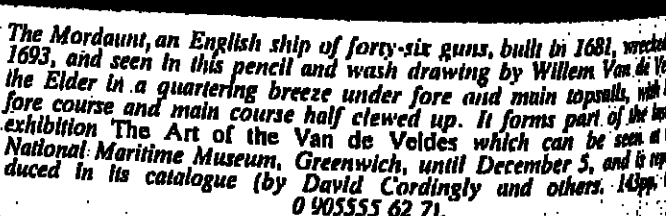
to the editor

Opera for the bourgeois

Die Entführung aus dem Serail King's Theatre, Edinburgh

request and MO should be
payable to LITR
DATABASE.

...and his designer
...the well-taken
...there's little external
...be sought in
...it's neither more nor less
...the vocal side of the
...below par for this familiar
...and, certainly not up to festival
...it shows the old that
...quite strong to the point of
...the young black man
...Smith, Yves, and Roland
...I can't say I have any
...with



fiery and creditable account of "Martiri alle Armi". One sorrowfully blossoms and fullness of tone in the deeper voices, though there are compensations in the sensitive and delicate work, in which mezzo-voice and pianissimo effects (for example in the Andantino of the quartet concluding the second act) are quite a revelation.

All in all, this is a disappointing showing by the Dresden Opera, not least because the expectation had run high down to what Herz and Kupfer, now well known in the West, might be able to achieve on their home ground. The ensemble work of a high order does not compensate for the absence of singers able to fulfil the demands of such formidable roles as Osmin, Donizetti's Don Giovanni, or the Countess, the Composer and the Baronessa. Nor is any distinctive style in evidence — there is nothing in the *Ariadne* which wouldn't have been equally at home on stage in New York or London. Although this is more than a partial sampling of the Welsh National Opera's (irony could be said to be in order) repertoire, it is clear that the company, under the leadership of Neanderlicher, is simply making the most of the resources available. The opera, seriously as theatrical as it is, has no longer anything startling about it. It has been more fruitful in

Mastering the media

La pietra del paragone
King's Theatre, Edinburgh

desire to show off her voice, and her legs, by bringing her into the denouement dressed as a Captain of the Hussars. None the less, the libretto suited the lively, sentimental, cynical genius of the twenty-year-old Rossini. It allowed him to show off his paces to Italy's smartest audience as a wit, as a tone-painter (the dreamily radiant brightening after the storm in the forest of Viterbo, muffed here by stage business and a moderate tenor) and as a skilled purveyor in music of the bustling, vituperative worlds of theatre and press dilettanti. (It's in *Piera* that we have the first substantial taste of Rossini's genius for jangling onomatopoeia, Pacuvio's famous "Missippipi", embryonic Offenbach, the opera's first show-stopper.)

Eduardo de Filippo's production is twenty-three years old but remains bright and clean. Mario Chlari's designs, ideal for the small King's Theatre, use simple painted drop-cloths and cut-outs to create a world

partly real, partly fairy-tale, of elegant apartments, rustic arbours, and woodland clearings in the style of Poussetta. It's here that an array of friends and acquaintances assemble for a house party given by the rich and as yet unmarried Count Asdrubale. Here, too, is the lovely Marchesa Clarice who loves the Count but fears that she may also be thought mercenary by her attention. In a world where pretty young girls are invariably kept from making young men by overbearing fathers, ogling geriatric guardians, *Pietra* offers a singular departure from the usual.

Not that Rossini attends in any detail to such niceties. Clarice's apprehension is a quality Mozart might

Fifty years on: Tolstoy at war

The TLS of September 15, 1932, carried the following review by R. Chazques of Tales of Army Life (1852-63) by Leo Tolstoy, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude:

The Sevastopol sketches reveal quite plainly that the intellectual origins of his difficult task, in the first of them it is not difficult to find the poet's own mood, in the emphasis on heroism and the soldier's readiness for death, the unthinking ardour of patriotism which filled Tolstoy. The descriptions of war

There is a brief chapter following this incident in which Tolstoy describes the sight of hundreds of wounded men lying on the floor of the mortuary chapel in Sevastopol, muttering curses or prayers with parched lips, while dawn breaks and the sun rises. Still it is the humanitarian in Tolstoy rather than the unreserved pacifist and apostle of non-resistance who is present at these scenes. The Levstov appears in a preface to the Sevastopol reminiscences in the Sevastopol published in 1889, in which Tolstoy rebukes him for not pointing the moral that to love one's neighbour is to refrain from killing him.

"Author, Author" 88, and the answers to competition No 84, are on page 1010.

Public Lending Right

Sir, It was a misfortune for me, when a member of the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, to be instructed in 1975 to draft a Bill for the implementation of an entirely new — and in my opinion wholly unjust — legal concept known as "joint authorship." No one knew then, and it is perfectly plain from Robertson and Hewison's article (August 27) that no one knows now, what is the basis of this supposed right, let alone how the mechanics of its implementation would be worked out. The concept has originated, in the minds of certain authors who thought they were hard done by because their works were not always paid for, in the minds of those who were apt to be read free of charge by borrowers from public libraries, as something vaguely analogous to copyright, although as a matter of fact it is not, and it is not the faintest resemblance to it.

In consequence of the agitation of certain lady novelists and politicians, literary personages of greater or lesser eminence in both Houses of Parliament, the notion that P.L.R. if it did not exist, must be invented was sold to politicians of both the main parties, and the government of the day felt obliged to put up some money, and a Bill in Parliament which should secure for them a quiet life and perhaps a few votes as quid pro quo. The Bill was passed. Ever loyal to my professional duties, I then wrote the Ministers of the Government (then in office), and to the honourable ruler that counsels me, to do his best, regardless of the merits or demerits of the case, to draft as decent a Bill as I could in the time, on hurried, garbled and inadequate instructions. Nothing could do would have prevented the legislation from being what it is like P.L.R itself, phoney in conception, ill-considered in its practical application, and in practice has also involved a significant misapplication of public money.

The proposition in 1975 seemed to be that "books" are borrowed from public libraries, by people who don't pay for the privilege of borrowing, that authors ought to get some financial kick-back in respect of borrowings, additional to what they have already (by presumption) received from their publishers; and that in the case the work of authors is undervalued by the world at large, and they don't get enough money for writing whatever it is they write, a

they ought to get more. Apparently the same thing has been said by other groups of workers in the last few years (miners, engine-drivers, dustmen, civil servants; hospital porters, firemen, seamen, tank-drivers and Members of Parliament). Most of these others can, and do, go on strike for what they suppose themselves to be worth. Authorities cannot go on strike in the expectation of getting any more money; in the case of some of them, however, one wishes they would!

The proponents of PLR did not stop at complaining that good authors were insufficiently rewarded. They asserted, by implication, that all authors, good, indifferent or terrible, should have more. On this reasoning, if a member of the public borrows a book from a public library, reads the first five pages, decides to find that it is rubbish, and returns it to the library the next day, he is adding to the count towards a date when the hand for that author, who thereby *pro tanto* relieved from the pen in a just world would be the pen of a writer bad books. There is no reason why authors should be subject than others to the general rule that good work is to be

Since authors insisted on having more money, regardless of merit, and the lady novelists and political literary personages were in a position, at that time, to force their views on Ministers, there had to be a Bill, and someone had to find money. But where was it to come from? It was plain that publishers would not for a moment entertain the idea of reducing their share.

the take; nor would they increase royalties to authors as they might possibly have done by reducing the discount payable to public libraries. It was politically unthinkable that borrowers from public libraries should be made to pay. The only possible source for the financing of PLR was the Exchequer, or, worse tears – it was decided to let the writing industry should henceforth be allowed to suck. The intention of the legislation to be laid before Parliament was therefore to provide out of public money, a kind of subsidy fund for authors, their heirs, successors and assigns.

Fortunately for the taxpayer, and in accordance with its proper function, the Treasury was able to limit the allocation of public money to £1 million or two; but one could almost hear his cries of anguish as the Minister for the Arts extracted from the Treasury that comparatively small amount — which may have been increased since. The amount made available at the time had to accommodate administrative costs which were enormous in the early stages of the scheme. Some arrangement was envisaged for ensuring that the whole lot would not be immediately scooped by Mr Kingsley Amis and the personal estate of Dame Agatha Christie, leaving nothing, or only a few pence a year, for writers of quality with small public appeal. Such difficult questions as what exactly is a "book"; what is to be the entitlement (if any) of authors of dictionaries and textbooks; illustrators, joint authors and editors; writers of short stories published together, etc. etc. were unanswered when the Bill went through, and had to be stood over until later. To judge from Robert Hewison's article, there are largely unanswerable still, being left to the judgment of the new State Registrar, with nothing to guess-work to go on, and the cost administration of a rather exigent fund of money completely overlooked by people who want so

It is possible to admire the success of the campaign for FLR, conducted as it was with such stridency and determination, and such unscrupulous reliance on bogus allegations of "justice," as to smother all opposition and make it appear that any questioning this hand-out of taxpayers' money must be in some sense illiterate, uncultured and anti-literature. Quite clever, really.

GODFREY CARTER
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The OED Supplement

Sir, — When I opened the *TL* of September 3 and addressed myself to what purported to be a review by Roy Harris of a *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary: Volume 1*, I was in anticipation of a textual analysis and criticism. The subtitle could hardly have been more inviting to a philologist, or, for that matter, to an historian: a major lexicographical project in English. But much the greater was my disappointment to discover that this was another politically propelled declaration of class distinctions in our family, and that to anyone who hears even part of an 'Open University' broadcast on any aspect of "society".

"There is nothing," says Mr. Harris, "more conducive to questionable, established, cultural values: the reassertment of language and its role in human affairs." The proposition towards which he moves throughout the rest of the article is that language, like all else, changes, and that though there *can* be no valid value judgments about what is correct and what is incorrect, Chaucer did not "claim originality" when he "observed that language changed; and he was right. It has changed; and in practice and vocabulary it changes so rapidly that few care about its origin or its history, or its unwelcome of their arrival and effect. The issue is *how* shall language change; through ignorant misused educated evolution? We need

ask what the fruits of the former would be; we already know all too well by the incoherent cacophony broadcast daily and nightly. Without grammar, without definition, without disciplined exercise in syntax, we are in danger of allowing English to be degraded by licensed misuse into dog English, as Latin was degraded into dog Latin; and we know what happened to Latin.

Mr Harris may consider the corruption and disintegration of English as a political goal of "multicultural" ergatocracy devoutly to be wished for. Of course, a new language with its grammar and elites would form a Not, however, before we had passed through linguistic dark ages even darker than the ones we are presently enduring. For my part I prefer to conserve and reinforce what is salvageable in the mighty wreck of English. The reinforcement of English is the subject for all candid dates for university entrance would be useful as first aid. Meanwhile, error, however crude, however drooling, should be distinguished as *error* "flout" does not mean "flout" merely because a truculent demagogue seemed to suppose that it did during the course of last year's bargaining exchanges; and when presumptuous clown says "perimeter", meaning "perimeter", something like that, does not alter itself after the meaning "perimeter" as it is to the schoolmaster's skill of R. W. Burchfield has shown himself in this, his latest contribution, ominously ready in my opinion, to confer the status of prophetic precedent upon the fruits of error and misunderstanding mere because they have achieved popular currency. Last year in California at a conference a far from junior academic told me that he had been "gestating" to me from the other end of the room. In another year or so shall we all be "gestating" our *gestations* where we raise our hands and

"What ordinary people think words mean is just as important," says Mr Harris, "as what experts declare them to mean." That way of popular flattery lies gibberish as confusion. What is important is the "ordinary people" (meaning most of us) shall have the opportunity of learning from the practice and example of educated teachers the meanings of the words they use and the nature of the language they have inherited. Then the changes they may propose will be wrought from a state of competence and not of insufficiency.

JOHN CHANDOS
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Sir, — Roy Harris in his interesting and stimulating review (September) of the OED Supplement pleads for the lexicographer to abandon established ways and encompass more than his usual printed-word basis of compilation.

Surely speech and writing are similar, the communication of ideas among humans, and, yet, though electronic writing may yet overtake us, for the dry written and printed word remains the major way of disseminating and storing knowledge. The whole system breaks down if plodders like me cannot, in writing and reading, retrieve what is intended. Here a dictionary (even with arguable inclusions or omissions) is invaluable: writer and reader often separated by time and geography. The more comprehensive the lexicographers make the work the greater its potential. Dare I say that etymology is exactness in knowing what the word means? Surely this is the true purpose of a dictionary.

Everyday spoken speech is too divorced from this. Here gesture, inflection and context convey most of the meaning. A group in the salar bar will express themselves in slang, neologisms, dialect and jokes that are only comprehensible to them. Should any doubt occur, the matter can be instantly clarified, person to person. The whole process

to the editor

completely ephemeral and these same people would probably be mystified by the meaning of much of their conversation if confronted by it in later years.

Even if one urges the lexicographer to concern himself with this it is doubtful whether he could. Inevitably the dictionary assigns importance to the printed word; it is after all a printed book itself. I doubt whether Roy Harris's awesome project of a "systematic analysis of the structures of communication in modern society" has anything to do with dictionaries or lexicographers.

PETER BENSON.

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Nabokov's 'Eugene Onegin'

Sir, - Dmitri Nabokov (Letters, September 3) has misunderstood what I said about his father's translation of *Eugene Onegin* in my discussion with the Russian poet David Kugulnikov.

In that discussion I made a sharp distinction between Pushkin's meaning, and the language used by translators to convey it in English. In the published account of the talk, immediately before those sentences quoted by Mr Nabokov, I am recorded as saying: "I owe Nabokov a very great deal. His translation is a marvellous 'crib', conveying perfectly the sense of the novel. His notes on *Onegin* are scholarly and helpful in the highest degree." In fact, ever since publishing my own translation of *Eugene Onegin* five years ago, I have emphasized my debt to Vladimir Nabokov. I have a great respect for him, both as a Russian scholar and (except in his translation of *Onegin*) as a writer of English.

But Mr Nabokov challenges me to

produce a few examples of "Nabokovian fantasy", so I will do so. Here are a number of words, chosen at random, which seem to me to be fantastic in the sense, not that they misrepresent Pushkin's meaning - they don't - but that their quirkiness unnecessarily distracts the reader's attention away from Pushkin, and makes him think about Nabokov and his strange choice of language: *preconizing* (1 LD); *devoiment* (1 LX); *dulcitude* and *juventude* (6 XLIV); *dolent* (7 XIX).

Then there is the odd case of the "shotman". When Tatiana falls in love with Onegin (3 XI), Pushkin compares her to a shivering hero who has spied far off a marksman (*shutok*) crouching in the bushes. In Nabokov's version this character becomes the *shotman*. I looked the word up, in as heavy as possible an edition of the *OED*, and consulted other lexical authorities; finally I learned that, among other things, a shotman is one who fires the explosive charge in a Cornish tin-mine. I have met Cornish tin-miners in Australia and other parts of the world - but this seems a bit far-fung even for a "cousin Jack". What, I ask myself, what the devil is this Cornishman doing here, crouching in the bushes in the middle of the Government of Pskov? If that isn't fantasy, I don't know what is.

CHARLES JOHNSTON.

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'Edmund Ironside'

Sir, - Eric Sams (August 13) bases his claim for Shakespearean authorship of *Edmund Ironside* on three main contentions: that the manuscript in which the play survives is authentic and in Shakespeare's hand; that the play strikingly anticipates

phrases from several of Shakespeare's earlier plays; and that the date of composition must be before 1589 (so that the Shakespearean parallels cannot be interpreted as echoes). He would appear to be mistaken on all counts.

Eleanor Boswell, who edited the play for the Malone Society in 1927, showed in her introduction that the manuscript must be a scribal copy. The hand shows none of the characteristics of the authentic signatures of Shakespeare or of the celebrated "Hand D" pages in *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (nor does Sams ever refer to the exhaustive descriptive analyses of that hand by Sir E. Maunde Thompson, which were in print in time to have enabled Eleanor Boswell to identify the hand of *Ironside* as Shakespeare's had she found grounds for so doing).

The use of parallel passages in authorship investigations has always had one crippling drawback: unless the date of both texts is certain, either could be the borrower. When Sams points out phrases from a single memorable speech in *Richard II* scattered throughout *Ironside*, it is hard to resist the thought that *Ironside* may be the debtor. The date of *Edmund Ironside* is not certain: the paper and the hand combine to suggest merely that, in Eleanor Boswell's words, "it might have been written at any time within a generation or so before or after 1600". The Bishop of London did not, *pace* Mr Sams, become licensee of plays in 1589; he had already been responsible for the licensing of printed plays since 1586, if not 1559, and the licensing of scripts for performance was the business of the Master of the Revels from at least 1579.

The attempt to present William Lambard's *Archeologia* (1588) as a source for *Ironside* involves inaccuracy as well as implausibility. Canute's laws, which occupy sixty of the book's 284 pages, are hardly its "chief contents". Nor did Canute's laws impose mutilation as a source of infamy. In context, the words of Lambard's Latin quoted by Sams read: "Uxor si marito supersit cum alio quocunque corpus miscuisse concutiat; deinde alique insignem omni in posterum aetate infamiam subit, maritus res eius omnes habet, mulier vero tum nasus, tum auriculae praecidentur." Shame to all posterity was one penalty for an adulterous wife, mutilation another. Holinshed's *Chronicle of England* (1587), book 7, chapters 1-11, supplies all the history to be found in the play, including the mutilation of "pledges" or hostages. Canute "commanded that such pledges as had been delivered to his father by cer-

teine noble men of this realm, for assurance of their fidelities, should have their noses slit, and their eares stuffed, or (as some say) their hands and noses cut off".

Edmund Ironside is a play of real interest. Its leading character, Earl Edrike, is a double-dyed traitor in the tradition of Shakespeare's Richard of Gloucester in the third part of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*. Like *Henry VI*, *Ironside* ends with a hollow truce and promises a sequel. This would no doubt have included the death of Edmund, though whether or not "as he sat on a priule to doo the necessities of nature" (as some of Holinshed's sources assert) we shall never know. Other predictable events for the next play would be the death of the treacherous Edrike and the politically advantageous marriage of Canute to Emma, widow of King Ethelred.

In style, manner and energy, especially with its comic characters, *Ironside* recalls not so much Shakespeare as another history play of unknown authorship and dispute date, *Thomas of Woodstock* or *The First Part of King Richard II*. The two plays have survived in the same collection of manuscripts; both seem to echo Shakespeare's *Richard II*; and both show signs of having been revived in the second or third decade of the seventeenth century. Mr Sams is surely right in supposing that *Ironside* belongs to the late years of the sixteenth century, but 1595-99 might seem likelier limits for its composition than before 1589. It is a pity that he pushes his other claims for the play so far.

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Aspects of Copyright

Sir, - As an editor of one of Penguin's recent Lawrence volumes to be published since normal copyright lapsed and of a forthcoming volume for Cambridge University Press in which a new copyright is established, I feel that Michael Holroyd's and Sandra Jobson's well-informed article, "Copyrights and wrongs: D. H. Lawrence" (September 3), is slightly misleading.

Normal readers and scholars alike are unlikely to find themselves now or in the future restricted to using the Cambridge texts, whatever interpretation Gerald Pollinger would like to place on current copyright law and no matter how often Cambridge University Press reiterates that the old

texts ought to disappear from the market. Apart from any other consideration, the old texts will be in demand cheaper to publish than the new ones. Only in such rare cases as *Apocalypse* where very substantial new matter has been added to the text would it seem unproductive to reprint the old text (and presumably my fellow-editor who have worked for both Cambridge and Penguin) would not have undertaken to edit these old texts if we considered them too corrupt to be worth reprinting. On the other hand the Cambridge edition is an improvement, sometimes dramatic, more often less so, on what we have had to date.

Without the establishment of a new copyright the Cambridge edition would not have been commercially feasible. This, it seems to me, is no remuneration to editors, is the *raison d'être* for establishing a new copyright. However, I reject the academic writers' suggestion that our publications "may well earn money through academic tenure and promotion" is something of a joke in the universities' current and foreseeable plight.

What I don't understand is why the writers of the article (and those who are they cite) complain when the public is presented with two versions of the text and left to choose for itself which it wishes to buy.

BRIAN FINNEY.

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Sir, - Michael Holroyd and Sandra Jobson conclude their interesting article (September 3) with a few pithy remarks about "copyright chaos" arising from the shortcomings - in 1982 - of the Copyright Act of 1956. Successive governments have hurried their heads in the sands of copyright, while illegal activities (video piracy, multiple photocopying, private recording etc) have boomed.

The Whitford Committee produced a comprehensive report in 1977. It was not until July 1981 that the government produced a much less comprehensive Consultative Document inviting further "debate". The debate has gone on for long enough: what is needed is action. If the government does not move quickly and forcefully its dilatory green paper will turn into a white elephant.

MARK LE FANU.

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Among this week's contributors

KINGLEY AMIS's most recent novel is *Russian Hide and Seek*, 1980.

HAROLD BEAVER is Professor of English at the University of Amsterdam.

T. J. BIRYON's novel *Swan Song* will be published shortly.

ANTHONY BLUNT is completing a monograph on the architectural oeuvre of Pietro de Cortona.

ALAN BROWNHOFF's most recent collection of poems, *A Night in the Gazebo*, was published in 1981.

MICHAEL BUTLER is Senior Lecturer in German at the University of Birmingham.

PATRICK CANNON is the author of *Faust as Mulan: A Study of Thomas Mann's novel 'Doctor Faustus'*, 1973.

MAURICE CHIBNALL is the editor of *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis: Volume One*, 1982.

JAMES CLAPHAM's *Person and Myth* will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

RICHARD COMBS is the editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Bulletin*.

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM's anthology *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse* was published last year.

GORDON DONALDSON's books include *Scottish Kings*, 1977.

J. B. DONNE is the translator of Gauguin's *Noa Noa*, 1980.

HUBERT L. DREYFUS is Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley.

JAMES FENTON is Theatre Critic of the *Sunday Times*.

VALENTINE FRASER is a lecturer in the Department of Art at the University of Essex.

SHIRLEY HAZZARD was a member of the United Nations staff from 1952 to 1962. Her *Defeat of an Ideal: A Study of the Self-Destruction of the United Nations* was published in 1973.

HAROLD HOBSON is an Honorary Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

A. L. LOEB is Senior Lecturer and Curator of the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University.

JOHN LUCAS is the editor of *The 1930s: a Challenge to Orthodoxy*, 1979.

ADAM MARS-JONES's collection of stories *Lantern Lectures* has recently won the Somerset Maugham Prize.

MICHAEL NEVE is a lecturer in the History of Medicine at University College London.

BLAKE NEVILL's books include *Cooper's Landscapes: An Essay on the Picturesque Vision*, 1976.

RICHARD OSBORNE is writing a book on Rossini.

NICHOLAS PHILLIPSON is co-editor with Rosalind Mitchison, of *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, 1970.

PAUL QUARRIE is the Librarian of Eton College Library.

CHRISTOPHER REID's most recent collection of poems, *Pea Soup*, will be published later this month.

FRANCIS SPALDING's biography of Roger Fry was published last year.

ROBERT WISTRICH's *Who's Who in Nazi Germany* was published earlier this year.

The Dasein as a whole

Hubert L. Dreyfus

MARTIN HEIDEGGER.
The Basic Problems of Phenomenology
Translated by Albert Hofstadter
396pp. Indiana University Press.
\$16.50.
0 253 17686 7

When *Being and Time* burst upon the philosophical scene in 1927 it seemed to drop out of the blue. Why, in the heartland of neo-Kantianism and phenomenological epistemology was Heidegger asking a seemingly empty and unmotivated question concerning the meaning of being? Only his own students, many of whom like Heidegger himself had grown up with Husserl's phenomenology, were in a position to understand. Now, thanks to the publication of his 1927 course, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, we can place the ontological orientation of *Being and Time* in its philosophical context.

In Albert Hofstadter's excellent translation, we can listen in as Heidegger clearly and patiently explains why one must deconstruct traditional epistemological concern with the relation of subjective content to transcendent object in the name of a distinction, never before made in philosophy, which he calls the ontological difference.

The students in Heidegger's course on phenomenology would have been familiar with Husserl's latest work, *Ideas*, 1914, in which Husserl developed his analysis of the intentional content of mental states, began in *Logical Investigations*, 1900, into a total account of the structure of the meanings by which a transcendent object whatsoever.

Husserl argued that since our mental contents our desires, beliefs, perceptions, assumptions, etc. - can be studied regardless of whether they successfully refer to things, indeed, of whether the notion of reference to mind-independent objects even makes sense, the phenomenologist can remain neutral as to reference, and simply study the structure of sense immanent in consciousness. This crucial methodological move, in which Husserl "suspended" the "natural attitude" in order to reflect on its intentional content, was called "bracketing existence". But, once we start talking about intentional content the most we can conclude is that our mental content purports to refer to independent referents, not that there are any such referents, or even whether there is anything more to *being* independently real than to be so taken.

The question how directive sense, the understanding of being, belongs to intention, and how intention itself is possible as this necessary reference, is not only unanswered in phenomenology but not even asked.

Heidegger's basic problem is how reference to mind-independent entities is possible. He takes a running start by approaching the question historically, actually investigating why, for Kant, existence is not a predicate but, rather, "absolute position"; what, for the Scholastics, constitutes the difference between essence and existence; and how, according to Aristotle, Hobbes, J. S. Mill and Lotze, assertions refer to objects. The discussion returns to the present with a quotation from *Ideas* in which Husserl accepts uncritically the "most radical of all distinctions of being - being as consciousness and being as being that 'manifests' itself in consciousness, 'transcendent, being'".

After a "phenomenological clarification" of the problems raised by these earlier thinkers, Heidegger concludes that "violence is practiced on the Dasein [human being] by preconceived notions of ego and subject drawn from the theory of knowledge." Indeed "what is called immanence in theory of knowledge is a complete inversion of the phenomenological facts."

His point is that human beings are not basically ego-subjects with mental states which are directed toward objects in the world. They are, indeed, *sometimes* correctly described as having private mental states, but they are always, and thus more basically, a kind of concerned activity which is inseparable from a public world in which every sort of object (tools, nature, people,

numbers, etc) can be manifest and directly encountered. In this natural everyday activity, which Husserl mischaracterized as an intentional attitude, "Self and world belong together in the single entity, the Dasein. Self and world are not like beings, like subject and object, or like I and thou, but self and world are the basic determination of the Dasein itself in the unity of the structure of being-in-the-world."

Heidegger gives a concise summary of his argument, which, of course, needs a lot of explaining.

To intentionality, as comportment towards beings, there always belongs an *understanding of the being of* those beings to which the intention refers. . . . This understanding of the being of beings is connected with the *understanding of world*, which is the presupposition for the experience of an intrawordly being. But, now, since world-understanding is at the same time an *understanding of itself by the Dasein* . . . the understanding of being that belongs to intentionality embraces the Dasein's being. . . .

The question now becomes: What does Heidegger mean by the understanding of the being of beings and the understanding of world and how are they supposed to be related to each other and to Dasein?

We will never get an answer if we try to map Heidegger on to what we already take for granted as sensible philosophy. Heidegger admired Aristotle as "the last of the great philosophers who had eyes to see and the energy and tenacity to force inquiry back to the phenomena. . . ." His idea of phenomenology, unlike Husserl's, was to stop ringing changes on the trusted notions of immanent and transcendent, conscious and unconscious, implicit and explicit, reflective and unreflective, subject and object, and get back to everyday experience. Heidegger is definitely not saying what Sir Peter Strawson, in his *New York Review of Books* review of George Steiner's Heidegger book, rather condescendingly finds "plausible", viz. that we each have an "unreflective and largely unconscious grasp of the basic general structure of interconnected concepts or categories in terms of which we think about the world and ourselves". This would be to make our understanding of being and of the world a belief system entertained by a subject, exactly the view Husserl held, which turns reality into a correlate of our conceptual scheme. Pouring ontological wine into epistemological bottles, Strawson's gloss makes Heidegger's concern with being seem "perfectly general" and thus amenable only to formal or trivial answers, however portentous we may be tempted to make them sound.

But, even granting his rejection of epistemology, what could Heidegger mean by our understanding of being if not some very general assumptions about reality? We must return to the lectures.

To explain the understanding of the being of beings which constitutes the self and world as a single entity, Heidegger begins by describing the classroom, contrasting his approach with Pichte's (a possible stand-in for Husserl):

The ontological distinction between res cogitans and res extensa, between ego and non-ego, cannot in any way be conceived directly and simply, as for instance in the form that Pichte uses to initiate the problem when he says: "Gentlemen, think the wall, and then think the one who thinks the wall." There is already a constructive violation of the facts, an unphenomenological onset, in the request "Think the wall." For in our natural comportment towards things we never think a single thing, and whenever we seize upon it expressly for itself we are taking it out of the contexture to which it belongs in its real content; wall, room, surroundings. . . . Sitting here in the auditorium, we do not in fact apprehend walls - not unless we are getting bored. Nevertheless, the walls are already present: even before we think them as objects

The "equipmental whole" Heidegger is describing is "non-conceptually understandable". Our understanding of it is not a theory, or a set of beliefs about how things will behave, but a set of interrelated skills, a kind of know-how. "In Germany we say that someone can *vorstellen* something. . . . This is equivalent to saying that he *erstehen* sich darauf *versteht* in the sense of being skilled or expert at it, has the know-how of it. The meaning of the term *verstehen* [Verstehen] as defined above is intended to go back to this usage in ordinary language."

What makes particular entities intelligible, then, is not our thoughts - Husserl's intentional contents - but our shared skills for coping with things in a shared context which Heidegger calls the world. As socialized into these public skills and practices we are this world prior to knowing about particular things and even prior to using them: "The world, within which . . . beings are encountered, is . . . always already world which the one shares with the other. . . . because the Dasein is antecedently constituted as being-in-the-world. . . ."

Heidegger's response to Kant and Husserl is, in effect, that if one supposes that realism is a posit or a thesis or a presupposition of our conceptual scheme, one is doomed to epistemological scepticism (we can never know if the thesis is correct) and worse, to transcendental idealism (all that realism could ever come to is our thesis plus whatever we decide to count as its confirmation). We can avoid these conclusions only by giving up the view that *all* our experience is mediated by intentional content. We must, therefore, abandon the Husserlian dogma that our relation to the world is *exhaustively* captured in terms of a subject perceiving, believing, making assumptions, etc. about objects and their contexts. We have to ask, rather, about the conditions of possibility of this whole Cartesian, intentionalist account.

Heidegger claims that we can encounter objects as real *multiplicatively*, i.e. perceive them *as* what they are, only on the basis of discriminations, reactions, manners of coping, etc. which cannot be analysed in terms of explicit and implicit intentional content.

The equipmental contexture stands at first, completely unobtrusive and unthoughtful. . . . "Unthoughtful" means that it is not thematically apprehended for deliberate thinking about things; instead, in circumspection, we find our bearings in regard to them. . . . When we enter here through the door, we do not apprehend the seats, and the same holds for the doorknob. Nevertheless, they are there in this peculiar way: we go by them circumspectly, avoid them, and the like.

This understanding in our practices required "a more original conception of intentionality. . . unknown to all previous philosophy."

On this account, realism is not a thesis or a theory but a function of the manifold, non-intentional shared skills just discussed. As Wittgenstein puts it in *On Certainty*, "Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc. They learn to fetch books, sit in chairs, etc. etc." Such skills fit into a whole system of shared practices, but these practices, as ways of doing things, and ways things matter, are not correlated with any intentional content. Thus it makes no sense to ask whether this intentional content is satisfied, i.e. whether the content corresponds to reality. We can ask of specific beliefs whether they are true or not, and about specific perceptual experiences whether they are veridical, but we cannot ask such questions about our ways of dealing with things and people which make such beliefs possible. *The thesis of realism*, i.e. the claim that our mental contents are directed to independent objects, distorts our basic way of being in the world which is the condition of all mind/world relations, is no relation at all.

Our practices embody specific ways of treating things as important and trivial, public and private, perceptual and imaginary, all of which adds up to a non-intentional understanding of what counts as real. Only in so far as we acquire this understanding of being do we become human. "The Dasein understands itself from the ability to be that is determined by the success and failure, the feasibility and unfeasibility, of its commerce with things." Only as thus socialized can we have intentional relations to people and things, both apparent and real. (It is interesting to note that Heidegger here makes this point without recourse to "existentialist" notions such as death, guilt and anxiety, which have an unfortunate, and, it now turns out, unnecessary prominence in *Being and Time*.)

In his later works Heidegger is interested in the specific, changing understanding of being or reality in our cultural practices, as opposed to that of other cultures and even our own past. But in 1927 he had not yet made his turn to "the history of being", and was seeking, rather, the most general understanding of being in all human practices. Still this necessity in the being from empty. Heidegger distinguishes the handy, the non-handy, and the merely on hand, and notes: "Even in a rough analysis a multiplicity of intrinsically founded levels of being are manifested within the being of things and of equipment alone."

Wittgenstein thought of the background of social practices as a "hurry-burry" which defied systematization:

How could human behaviour be described? Surely only by showing the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. Not what one man is doing now, but the whole hurry-burry, is the background against which we see an action. . . .

Heidegger, however, claims to find the unifying structure of world, and indeed, of all intelligibility in the structure of temporality. This is the most difficult and also the most dubious aspect of his early work. In Part II of *Basic Problems* (as in Division II of *Being and Time*) he seeks to lay out the temporal structure of our comportment towards beings and to ground this in the ultimate horizon of what he calls primordial temporality, which is supposed to be the structure of understanding itself and account for "the immediate unity of the understanding of being and comportment towards beings".

The first move is relatively easy to follow. The equipmental totality is not a "jumbled heap of things but an environs, a surroundings, which contains within itself a closed, intelligible contexture". Our pragmatic activity is structured as purposive (though not necessarily in terms of intentionalist goals), we are always already given (although not necessarily remembered) and we orient our lives "circumspectively" in a current context (which we take account of without necessarily noticing). In Heideggerian terms "the temporality of dealing with equipment is retentive-expectant representing (Gegenwärtigen)". For this temporal openness, which is his "more original conception of intentionality", Heidegger takes over from the tradition the name "transcendence".

"The Dasein . . . in its being is out beyond itself. . . . Transcendence means to understand oneself from a world." He can then conclude: "[Husserlian] intentionality is founded in the Dasein's transcendence. . . . Transcendence cannot conversely be explained in terms of . . . [traditional accounts of] intentionality."

The Dasein is intentional only because it is determined essentially by temporality. What is harder to understand is Heidegger's attempt to show that this temporality (Zeitlichkeit) is in fact grounded in an even more primordial three-dimensional openness which he calls Temporalität (translated, out of desperation, as Temporality with a

capital "T"). In other words, Heidegger wants to show that the temporality of the understanding of the being of equipment is grounded in the Temporality of the understanding of being itself. Just as temporality is supposed to be the structure of everyday, local, pragmatic activity. Temporality (with a capital "T") is supposed to be the structure of the background or world "upon which" such activity takes place. This ultimate structure must account for the possibility of practical understanding and so must be structurally similar to (but not identical with) the temporal structure of pragmatic activity; yet it must also leave open the possibility of all other kind of activity as well. What this most basic structure is, remains, in spite of Heidegger's sincere and heroic efforts, almost totally incomprehensible.

This may not be the reader's fault, however. As Heidegger admits:

Faulty interpretations of transcendence, of the basic relationship of the Dasein to beings and to itself, are no mere defects of thought or acumen. They have their reason and their necessity in the Dasein's own historical existence.

Without knowing where the faulty interpretation lies, we can be quite persuaded that there is also a faulty interpretation concealed within the Temporal interpretation of being as such, and again no arbitrary one.

As Wittgenstein saw, laying out the structure of the background is well-nigh impossible. It soon became obvious that Temporality was too closely tied to the structure of equipment to account for our ability to encounter other entities such as natural things and works of art. Heidegger spent the rest of his life trying to work out the topology of what he called the clearing, the open, the region, etc. On the way he abandoned his early account of temporality as *too metaphysical*. What remains central in his thought to the end, however, is the fundamental difference between the world, clearing, or background of shared historical linguistic practices - on the one hand, and mental states and their objects, on the other. At the end of *Basic Problems* Heidegger calls this basic difference the ontological difference and claims it as his contribution to philosophy. He remarks that "the distinction between reality and existence, or between *essentia* and *existentia*, does not coincide with the ontological difference but belongs on the side of one member of the ontological difference". All the problems of traditional epistemology, culminating in Husserl's phenomenology, come from failing to see this distinction, and failing to sort out the complex structures of the background practices which embody our understanding of every sort of being. "Thus we see that the ontological difference is not as simple . . . as it appears in its plain formulation, but what ontology aims at, that which *differ* here, being itself, reveals an ever richer structure within itself." What might at first seem an empty and unmotivated fascination with being, is in fact Heidegger's attempt to call attention to the complex unity and intelligibility of our shared background practices, and to show their importance for philosophy.

Essays in Kant's Aesthetics, edited by Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (323pp. University of Chicago Press, £17.50, 0 226 11226 8) contains eleven articles, for the most part specially commissioned over a number of years and previously unpublished. Part One, called "Pleasure, Beauty and Judgement", includes essays by Paul Guyer, Ralf Meerbote, Richard E. Aquila, and Anthony Savile. Part Two, "Art and Genius", explores questions of originality and creativity, with papers by Donald W. Crawford, Timothy Gould and Ingrid Stadler. Parts Three and Four deal with the relations between Beauty and Freedom, Morality, the World, with essays by Ted Cohen, Dieter Henrich, Stanley Cavell, and Jerry B. Sobel.

Author, Author

Competition No 88

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than October 8. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 88" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Friary House, St John's Lane, London EC4M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on October 15.

1 Most of the characters in this book still live, and are prosperous and happy. Some day it may seem worth while to take up the story of the younger ones again, and see what sort of men and women they turned out to be; therefore it will be wisest not to reveal any of that part of their lives at present.

2 That night, as we sat on the taffrail, gazing out upon the wide sea and up into the starry firmament, a thrill of joy, strangely mixed with sadness, passed through our hearts - for we were at length "homeward bound", and were gradually leaving far behind us the beautiful bright, green, coral islands of the Pacific Ocean.

3 I think it will be best for us to go quickly and quietly away. At the end of the field, among the thin gold spikes of grass and the harebells, and Gipsy roses and St John's Wort, we may just take one last look over our shoulders, at the white house where neither we nor anyone else is wanted now.

Competition No 84

Winner: William Beckwith

1 He knew the hotel to be antiquated but this was overdoing it. The belle chambre au quatrième, although

too large for one guest and too cramped for a group, lacked every kind of comfort. He remembered that the lower room where he, a big man of thirty-two, had cried more often and more bitterly than he ever had in his sad childhood, had been ugly too but at least had not been so sprawling and cluttered as his new abode. Its bed was a nightmare. Its bathroom contained a bidet (amply enough to accommodate a circus elephant sitting) but no bath. The toilet was refused to stay up.

V. Nabokov, *Invitation to a Beheading*, chapter 3.

2 I

The lists of affection

Valentine Cunningham

JULIAN SYMONS
Critical Observations
213pp. Faber. £9.75.
0 571 11688 4

What manner of man ought a critic to be? What manner of critic a man? The photo on the dust jacket of *Critical Observations* catches Julian Symonds appropriately surrounded by works of art, the critic among paintings, but also backed into the corner of some room—for all the world as if he'd been hustled into this spot by some flushed interlocutor eager to know the answer to those basic critical and moral questions. And Symonds's expression is an impressive mixture. It's kind, but it's also as tough as can be, the look of someone shrewd and unflusterable, alert, canny, nobody's fool, a weigher of replies. Flitting so, one feels, for the enquirer are the ones this collection of critical pieces and memorabilia keeps asking—not least of its own author's practices—as it meditates on literature and literary people and prowls continually about the doings of Symonds's important critical contemporaries—the monstrous Wyndham Lewis, the Reverend T. S. Eliot, billboarding Grigson and curmudgeonly Lewis, anarchizing George Woodcock and the Stalinizing crew of *Left Review*.

No questions, this book implies, deserve more serious pondering. What helps keep the critical writing of Julian Symonds so attractive, though, is that he's never been free to let seriousness collapse into mere dullness. Like Walter Allen and V. S. Pritchett, critics he often reminds one of, he has lived frankly in the marketplace. He himself has drugged—wading through some eight books a day, he says, for his own great book on the crime story, editing, writing crime stories, putting in years in the fiction-reviewing mill—and he sympathizes with others for whom the literary life has meant pressed labour, honourable drudgery like his namesake Arthur Symonds (trying "by reviews, articles, and books done to order, to support" himself and his spendthrift wife in "flats at Maida Vale and St John's Wood, and then in a cottage at Wittersham in Kent"). Dullness, as the hard-pressed man of letters has learned, by the hard route, is an unaffordable luxury. Instead, liveliness has become one of Symonds's most natural critical criteria.

He comes down hard on *Left Review*, stupidly blinding itself for ideological reasons, he argues, to the dull tosh most of the proletarian writers it encouraged were producing. (He picks out a marvellously killing opening sentence: "Muffled in an old overcoat, bought at Paddy's rag market, Lawrence, the old man, sat slithering in his dockside lodging in Liverpool, coughing his life away and drinking himself to death.") The *Criterion* had plenty of terminal sickness about it but among its ills, Symonds feels, was its critics' "wifely boring of readers." On the critical side... the magazine looks now most dully old-fashioned and uninteresting... Almost every issue contains some long, stilingly dull article on the evolution of English blank verse, the poetry of Rossetti, the scansion of Shakespeare! Meanwhile, however, the youthful Symonds was revealing the zealous eye for a new chance that would keep *Twentieth Century Verse* afloat without a press baroness's money by getting his copies of the *Criterion* for nothing—"by asking" Fabers for sample book numbers, which they supplied for the cost of postage.

A disconcerting practice of my youth," he calls that dodge. But like his insistence that readers are people who also need amusement this strikes one actually as an instance of rather commendable realism. Symonds can't always arrange for dullness never to encroach on his writing—who can?—but at least this telling realism never flags. Characteristically, he is impatient of a critic like Arthur Symonds who tends "to refer any actual work back to theory." That's why he is so hostile to *Left Review* for praising

bad prose because of its correct working-class tones, lauding windy poems because they were about Stalin, dispraising Pasternak at the behest of mere Party lines, and so on. And it's also why Symonds stands as a constant adversary of all those New and ever Newer Critics who would stake out for writing a bounded space free of intervention from social events, somehow distant from people's lives (including writers' lives), from history and politics. He quotes with approval Dashiell Hammett's assertion that "The contemporary novelist's job is to take pieces of life and arrange them on paper. And the more direct their lifelike they should turn out." He relishes the physical grasp of Frances Newman's writing ("an almost oppressive sense of sexual pleasure in 'physical contact'") and of Simonson's—in which "close emotional contact almost always implies physical expression—the image of the crowded train with bodies rubbing against each other is a fitting one."

Like Hammett, Symonds is forever measuring a writer's work against streets and bodies, for him the knowable realities. A Londoner, an urban man himself, he responds sympathetically to Hart Crane's fascination with the metaphors of modernity, "automats, the cinema, skyscrapers, radio antennae, subway, dandruff advertisements, traffic lights." He quotes with feeling a letter from his friend Ruthven Todd that is laden with yearning to tread again the American city pavements, to grip America out more: "I want to have a hot pastime on my, I want to look at the Charles River, I want to see Scully Square in Boston and the Italian Market the other side of the tracks. I want the smell of Bleeker Street." Fall in Robert Frost's and Emily Dickinson's Amherst was clearly something understanding to attract "an incorrigible city-dweller" such as Symonds. But, as he rightly describes Amherst in his piece "A Year in Academe" about visiting Amherst College as a writer in residence, the place is really a little *urbis in rure*, not at all short on the urban provisions Symonds needs. In particular big libraries ("an eight minute walk up College Hill... to the splendid Robert Frost Library instead of a half-hour journey to the London Library"). What Amherst lacked in the end, however, was enough people for Symonds's taste—after all he was glad when he got back to his namesake's thronging London ("here, in the motley Strand, among these hurrying people").

Crowds, the peopled streets: like Poe's Man of the Crowd (and Symonds touches very nicely here on the writing of his most understanding little book on Poe in that same Robert Frost Library), like Poe's crowd-hugger, Symonds keeps returning to the ineluctable givenness of bodies, the blunt fact of human physicality. It is, of course, the "shock" (as he calls it) of the corpse which grants his own and other people's crime fiction their powerful tug on the real.

These preferences do have a traceable source. They go back to the inter-war years in which Symonds began as critic and editor and started writing his crime stories—the period when the street literature of modernism, the writings of Joyce, Eliot and Woolf, had the classic-crime story was having a heyday, and the bombing of Spanish towns was predicating a future of streets choked by the unarguably cruel realities of the cadaver. Symonds is a 1930s man, shaped by that chaotic time when the world had gone, in Wyndham Lewis's phrase, all "crime club." Symonds is, of course, one of the most memorable recollers of that period. *The Thirties* remains the best single account of the decade. And here, as elsewhere, he returns us to the 1930s as to the most real time of his life. "During the thirties," in the "thirties," "in those days," he's always getting to his feet as a chief witness. He knows what the *Criterion* and *Left Review* stood for in their day because it was his days well. Mention Bert Marshall and he'll remind you of when "every-

Herbert was a Bert", prole for political reasons. Reviewing Kingsley Amis's pastiche thriller *The Riverdale Murder*, he can testify to the accuracy of its 1930s touches, point out its acquired tricks "of the time." The Thirties connection others might miss, he will spot—such as the origins of Snow's *Strangers and Brothers* sequence in a feeling its author had in a Marseilles street on New Year's Day, 1935.

Symonds is thoroughly aware of the dangers of a critic's using touchstones too rigidly. He doesn't like, for instance, the too-narrow list of Lewis's preferred authors and books. He also points out the perils of living as long as Arthur Symonds did, of falling tiredly victim to tastes formed in too distant past. But having measured the possible pitfalls he persists in plotting the 1930s as a test, in checking people out by their response to "what was not only a period to time, but also a way of thinking and feeling," "a self-contained movement involving a very particular use of language." And who would complain about this? Symonds makes it seem only fitting when he wonders of Frances Newman's work how it would have got on in "the chilling climate of the thirties," or points out that Snow's *The Masters* set in 1937, a time of deep student concern about politics in general and about the Spanish Civil War in particular, but such matters are not mentioned in the book. Symonds persuades one to agree that the 1930s issues, the period's pressures to connect literature with a certain kind of politics, still matter, that it's not to measure a writer's quality by what he did, and what he now does with, that formative decade.

What Symonds himself did most of in the Thirties, critically speaking, was to run his little magazine *Twentieth Century Verse* and run about with a bunch of anarcho-leftists such as George Woodcock, Roy Fuller and Ruthven Todd. These were chaps, like Symonds himself, who weren't in any of the Oxford and Cambridge sets, who were marginals of the literary world and placeable with certainty as neither *Left Review*'s nor *Scrutiny*'s, neither *New Verse*'s men. In that world of factions and the house organs of factions it didn't count, say, simply to sing the Internationale—even to sing it on a tube-train, as Symonds reports that he and Woodcock once did. It mattered more in Symonds's world that he sang it. The *Twentieth Century Verse* party preferred its own tones and accent. To be sure, they admired and to an extent imitated Grigson's backing and blood-sucking in *New Verse*, his valiant-for-truth, incorruptibly harsh stance. But they admired still more Grigson's patron saint, Wyndham Lewis, who was even more passionately lonely and defiant. And those 1930s preferences are still, it appears, ones that Symonds owns. He still professes to admire Wyndham Lewis. He's still defending here blood—and long after Grigson himself has publicly disowned his billbook. He warns still to *Scrutiny*'s waving of interest in polite critical exchanges. He has no time for any comfortable monger of orthodoxes, on left or right.

He quotes with enthusiasm Mrs Leavis's sneer about the literary world's inheriting insiders, all those "odious little boys" from the right schools who oil their moneyed and privileged way "in a body up to the universities to become prelatious young men, and, still essentially unchanged, from there move into the literary quarters vacated by the last batch of their kind."

No one, I suppose, has more living acquaintance with the field of little magazines than Symonds. There's not likely to be anyone anywhere to touch him when it comes to measuring, say, the precise quality of George Woodcock's *Now* ("much the best periodical of a radical kind in England" between 1944 and 1947) or to manoeuvring knowledgeably among the likes of the *Nick Carter Weekly*, *Detective Story Magazine*, *Black Mask* or *Dime Detective Magazine*. It's no surprise at all to find that his Amherst days were spiced with good things he'd found in the *Amherst Student*. And, evidently, Symonds believes that the little magazine, the more like a righteously narrow, self-consciously dissenting sect, the better. No wonder *Poetry Nation Review* is more or less his current ideal. If only, he complains, there weren't so few of that kind. But, he suggests, the easy glossiness of the colour magazines has come in to usurp and corrupt energies that critically stricter publications would once have been able to deploy. Symonds evinces no surprise that Ian Hamilton's *Review* didn't expand successfully into the lush numbers of the Arts Council-backed *New Review*. As for the *New Statesman*, a financially successful paper (as it was when he wrote about it in the early 1960s), it earns the strongest of snubs ("champion endorser of reputations just established... its collected volumes are a reference book to who is intellectually in or out at a given time"). To sell out, you have to have sold out.

This continuing unbuyable probity, the stonily pursued incorruption—which Symonds has managed to maintain amidst all the pressures of the marketplace—gives his work the magnetism of an ungratuitously high moral tone. But this is not the only aspect of his critical handily that attracts. There is also the determined boyishness of his taste for the unrespectable subject—a feel for the naughtily provoking that, in Symonds's generation, also marks the adult work of Auden and F. W. Bateson. "You don't," Symonds was amused to discover in Amherst, "talk about male-female relationships." Symonds talks bluntly about sex. He scorns the mealy-mouthed Lewis who spoke of *Lady Chatterley* "strongly distasteful sexual detail." He can't be stopped, on this as on other occasions, from rejoicing in details about paedophilia. Larkin and other young poets at the Fortune Press. He dwells happily on what appears to have been the first transvestite crime story (*Sudden Death* by B. C. Skottowe). He contemplates with interest Simonson's non-stop sex life and his desire as a writer to "penetrate humanity." "Erections!"

Loss

Here in this hotel room half across the world...
The air languored; the bathroom
Shiny as a new tooth—
Pain floods in at last.

No one ever did all they could:
And all we did was not enough
For you. You couldn't go so soon—
Go when the going was good?

Not too soon. Not when you were all-powerful.
A parent owes it to a child to be in keeping:
First present them distant, and finally
Absent. But all without screaming.

Connie Bensley

Into the pyramid of silence

Harold Beaver

MERTON M. SEALTS, JR.
Pursuing Melville 1940-1980:
Chapters and Essays
419pp. University of Wisconsin Press.
£19.25.
0 299 08870 7

There is a canard still going the rounds that Melville had been wholly forgotten by his countrymen at the time of his death. Even before his death Edward Bok, editor of the *Ladies Home Journal*, wrote:

There are more people to-day who believe Herman Melville dead than there are those who know he is living. And yet if one chooses to walk along East Eighteenth Street, New York City, any morning about 9 o'clock, he would see the famous writer of sea stories—stories which have never been equalled perhaps in their special line... Busy New York has no idea he is even alive, and one of the best informed literary men in the country laughed recently at my statement that Herman Melville was his neighbor by only two city blocks. "Nonsense," said he. "Why, Melville is dead these many years!" Talk about literary fame? There's a sample of it!

Yet invitations had been extended to Melville ("among the very first") to join the Authors Club, which he declined, just as he rejected the advances of a Canadian professor seeking particulars of his life and "literary methods". His silence had grown pyramidal, like the whale's. He had "become too much of a hermit." In his own words, and "his nerves could no longer stand large gatherings." More to the point, he was hard at work on *Billy Budd*.

His death in 1891 created a flurry of renewed interest. Merton M. Sealts Jr. wrote in 1974: "The New York Sun, Times Tribune, and World and the Boston Journal and Evening Transcript carried obituary notices within a day or two of his passing, editorials and extended critical appraisals soon followed, and by the end of December 1891 some thirty notices or longer articles had been printed or reprinted in at least eighteen American newspapers and four magazines." This was not neglect exactly. Yet it remains true that Melville had been largely ignored for a generation and that it needed another two generations for the retrieval of his reputation to become securely based.

Sealts belongs to the second of these two generations, as the years of his pursuit (1940-1980) show. He was infected with enthusiasm for the chase at Yale and never deviated in his allegiance. Two senior papers, written for Stanley Williams on Emerson and Melville remained the foundation of his life's work. A graduate paper on Melville's "Theory of Knowledge", 1940, was completed by a long essay on "Melville and the Platonic Tradition", 1980, written specifically for the present volume. The consistent, close-hammered grain of his work is remarkable. So is this volume, meticulously vouching, project by project, for every decade.

The ground tilled is small, but it has never been trivial or dull. Sealts has worked mainly on the task of reconstruction. He has attempted to reconstruct Melville's library (largely dispersed at his death), his lectures (from newspaper reports), his family relationships (from letters and early biographies), his unfinished final project of *Billy Budd*, *Sailor* (from a notoriously tricky manuscript). With undue modesty, he acknowledges his affinity to Melville's "Sub-Sub-Librarian" who supplies the extracts that introduce *Moby-Dick*:

It will be seen that this mere painstaking burrower and grub-worm of poor devil of a Sub-Sub-Librarian has gone through the long Volumes and street-stalls of the Brooks in his search for a recognizable community... of nineteenth-century American writers that would constitute a "usable past" for their descendants. Sealts is a more dependable scholar than Brooks, but he has somehow succumbed to the latter's cosy notion

studies have been exercised that Sealts has had to defend himself against charges of avoiding interpretation. "All you diligent disciples of Prof. Williams," wrote Henry A. Murray, "have chosen to remain with the fact-collectors, as if literary criticism should be made into a kind of quasi-science."

In retrospect, there have been more than enough interpreters. Every essay in this book is based on exacting research. However small in scope, it made a contribution that has genuinely and permanently advanced the subject. This used to be called scholarship and was the hallmark of the university. Now, on a stage that is crowded with brilliantly gesticulating interpreters and semioticians, such clear-headed and pedestrian-seeming routines apparently need an apology. But there is no need. Professor Sealts's work on Emerson's *Journals* and *Miscellaneous Notebooks*, his edition (with Harrison Hayford) of *Billy Budd*, *Sailor* (1962), his work on the chronology and reception of Melville's shorter fiction, his record of Melville's readings, are all indispensable building-blocks on which any future critical or biographical work must rest.

The 1940s were a fertile decade to have entered American literature. Pioneers, mostly British like Raymond Weaver and D. H. Lawrence, had inaugurated Melville studies. But in 1929 Lewis Mumford's challenging *Herman Melville* had appeared, followed in 1938 by Charles Olson's "Lear and Moby-Dick", followed in 1941 by the magisterial *American Renaissance* by Olson's mentor and teacher at Harvard, F.O. Matthiessen. These were the key years when Melville's grand-daughter, Eleanor Melville Meland, was still alive, helping the happy few in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Jay Leyda was working on that unique and admirable compendium, *The Melville Log* (1951). Such was the climate of excited and shared discovery which Sealts entered and has helped to sustain. He remained open to every shift of opinion; but the "genetic-historical" approach is now so deeply ingrained that it is applied equally to the cluster of criticism surrounding a

single Melville text ("I and My Chimney") as to the confusions surrounding a long manuscript.

Typical is Sealts's lengthy correspondence (1941-1965) with Charles Olson. Both were on the hunt for scattered volumes from Melville's library, with endlessly protracted discussions of a never undertaken joint visit to the Bell Collection of the Brooklyn Public Library. Olson was coy and full of hints, scatty with parentheses and italics. Sealts, measured and probing, Olson was consumed by a kind of pseudo-Homeric question. "He is Homer, and I seek to prove it," he asserted in 1949; "the most important creator, the only creator of his particular kind, SINCE HOMER." Melville can open an archaic narrative, the which ain't been done since above-mentioned Greek.

Except, oddly enough, for "LANGUAGE": "his language is too careless to live! could weep over that/ Whitman less so, the 100 lines must be his limit to the American tragedy, it was not Melville who had Whitman's diaphragm or ear. It would have helped." Sealts apparently admired such outpourings. The correspondence is both a comic and a moving testimonial to the testy, uncommensurate relationship between a scholar and a poet.

It was the Scottish poet and novelist, Robert Buchanan, back in 1884, who had first called Melville "the one great imaginative writer fit to stand shoulder to shoulder with Whitman." Yet it is precisely that potentially wild and ribald side of Melville of which Sealts is wary. Writing of "I and My Chimney", among whose attributes are doubtless its phallic innuendoes, Sealts remarks:

I would agree that the chimney has certain physiological and sexual connotations, some of which I pointed out long ago, in a footnote. But they scarcely appear crucial to the overall symbolic pattern; the chimney surely represents more than a masculine counterpart of the biological imagery in "The Tartarus of Maids".

Why? Why that "surely"? In a moist thorough examination of that tale, this

Striving for nationality

that the community is more important than the writers.

Blake Nevius
BENJAMIN LEASE
Anglo-American Encounters: England and the Rise of American Literature
299pp. Cambridge University Press.
£20.
0 521 23666 5

This is a curious book. It is not at all clear what Benjamin Lease is up to or what audience he has in mind. He has marked out as his terrain the first half of the nineteenth century and proposes to chronicle both the rise of American literature in that period and the series of "Anglo-American encounters" that were, as he puts it, "a significant force in shaping the literary careers" of the ten American writers who made possible "that extraordinary half-decade of masterpieces between 1850 and 1855." But whether the distinctive nature of American literature was forged during these decades in the crucible of Anglo-American love-hate encounters is certainly arguable, especially if the question is engaged on the pleasantly superficial level of this book. What Professor Lease gives us is the context for a study rather than the study itself. He seems always to be lingering in the ante-room of his proper subject. His material is for the most part familiar to students of American literature, though by diligent canvassing of journals and secondary sources he has enhanced the documentation of familiar episodes. But his approach, so far as it can be defined, resembles that of Van Wyck Brooks in his search for a recognizable community... of nineteenth-century American writers that would constitute a "usable past" for their descendants. Lease is a more dependable scholar than Brooks, but he has somehow succumbed to the latter's cosy notion

entitled *The Scarlet Letter*—to be followed in short order by *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*. The only answer is that out of small acorns great oaks do indeed appear to grow. The remainder of the chapter is given over to a review of Hawthorne's four romances (including a brief nod at the much-debated question of why Hawthorne chose a first-person narrator for *The Blithedale Romance*), a glance at the unfinished romances of his decline, and a long account of his involvement in the Delia Bacon controversy—which, if nothing else resurrects momentarily the British connection.

The chapter on Melville is another example of the author's tendency to compromise his argument by wandering off into bypaths. The roster of Melville's fictional British seamen, from Jack Chase to Captain Vere, the difference between the British and American texts of *Moby-Dick*, the opinions of Faulkner and Hemingway regarding Melville, and the contributions of Melville's British admirers in keeping his name alive during the years he was disregarded at home, are all matters of peripheral interest, but the great theme obviously is the influence of Shakespeare, Browne, Burton, and Carlyle, among others, on the rapid and striking efflorescence of Melville's art, and this matter is treated at best cursorily. Too often the chapter suffers from the same old "encounter" as John Neal's early recognition of Hawthorne, William Carlos Williams's estimate of Poe, Irving's writings on the American West, and the various feuds and liaisons between Cooper and Irving. Perhaps one's disappointment would not be so keen if the whole subject of Anglo-American relations in the realm of literature and the arts during the first half of the nineteenth century, a subject unparalleled in the opportunities it still has to offer, were not to date so thinly cultivated.



Abner Pratt house, 170 North Kalamazoo Street, Marshall, 1880, is reproduced from Architecture in Michigan by Wayne Andrews (191pp. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Michigan 48202. \$13.95.)

is the one aspect rapidly and uneasily shrugged off. It seems to embarrass the scholar, as maybe Melville in person might have done. Here again the most memorable glimpse we have of him as an old man in the 1880s is relegated to a distant footnote. It is worth retelling. For it reveals a freer, more joyous Melville, on a spree in upstate New York, than the hermit of Twenty-Sixth Street. Ferris Greenslet (writing to Willard Thorp in 1946) recalled that summer of 1886 or 1887 when, as a boy of eleven or twelve, he had listened to "a singularly vital and impressive" man of about seventy who was spinning yarns in a barbershop in Glens Falls. The barber's customer announced that he had driven by buggy "some eight or nine miles in a flat hour."

Clad in a blue double-breasted suit of a seagoing flavor, he was seventy-ish, with a lot of hair and a beard well grizzled, a vigorous body, "plump spiciness", a well tanned countenance, a bright and roving eye, making up a singularly vital and impressive personality. I remember no one that I have met in the fifty odd years since more vividly.

The barber, "having apparently ministered to his patient before", then said to him:

"Tell us some more about those adventures you had in the South Seas when you were a boy." Whereupon he began a flow of joyous narrative, which I did not identify with Typee until nearly half a century later.

The thing went on better and better until after my own job was finished, and I continued to listen spellbound. The climax came when the barber inquired:

"Weren't there any girls down there?" "My God!" said the whiskerando, "I'll say there were! I went back to the island a couple of years after I left there on board a man-of-war and the first thing I saw when I went ashore was my own little son about a year and a half old running around naked in the sun on the beach."

"How did you know it was your son?" asked the barber.

"He had to be," said the story teller. "He carried his bowsprit to starboard!"

These, I assure you, were his *ipissima verba*. On the surface of him at least there was every indication of a central *jolie de vivre*, which is not without interest considering that just at that time he must have been writing, or at any rate thinking about, *Billy Budd*.

England, her friendship with Lady Byron, and the juicy revelations of *Lady Byron Vindicated*. The same may be said of the history of Emerson's friendships with Carlyle and John Sterling, which is shrewd and circumstantial, though one is left with the question why the most important product of Emerson's British experience, *English Traits*, is never discussed.

It seems to me that the difficulties to come are foreshadowed in the Preface, when we are confronted with a series of incompatible statements. Lease announces that his concern has been "less with the nature of nationality in American literature than with a better understanding of our most important early writers". On the other hand, Part One of his book ("Forays") proposes to treat six American novelists "in their strivings toward a distinctively 'American voice'." Part Two ("Forays and Friendships") will describe "the campaigns of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman for cultural independence." If these last two aims do not concern "the nature of nationality in American literature", what do they concern?

At any rate, this confusing diversity of interests may help explain why the compass of Professor Lease's attention swings so widely—why, for example, we are often reminded of such purely intranational "encounters" as John Neal's early recognition of Hawthorne, William Carlos Williams's estimate of Poe, Irving's writings on the American West, and the various feuds and liaisons between Cooper and Irving. Perhaps one's disappointment would not be so keen if the whole subject of Anglo-American relations in the realm of literature and the arts during the first half of the nineteenth century, a subject unparalleled in the opportunities it still has to offer, were not to date so thinly cultivated.

Bible schoolmen

Marjorie Chibnall

Beryl Smalley

Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning: From Abelard to Wyclif
430pp. Hambledon Press, 35
Olivecroft Avenue, London NW1.
£25.
0 9506882 6 6

When Beryl Smalley published her *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* over forty years ago she opened up the subject for the first time to non-specialists. It was a formidable undertaking. The Bible was "the most studied book of the middle ages", yet thousands of manuscripts of medieval commentaries and glosses remained unprinted. Inadequately catalogued. A long line of scholars from Denifle to Wilamowitz had investigated individual problems, but general histories still occasionally dismissed the whole period as one of obscurity and decadence, and no one had attempted to popularize the subject. Beryl Smalley's achievement was to place it firmly in the lecture-rooms of universities for serious study as a vital part of the history of medieval culture.

She was the first to recognize that much in her book would need to be expanded and modified. A second edition followed, and two further books were completed. One investigated the lively and idiosyncratic use of classical traditions by a group of fourteenth-century friars; a second showed how theologians related their studies to contemporary problems of church and state during the Becket controversy. In addition she produced a series of papers on individual commentators and preachers, which were, in her own words, satellites of the three books, both prefaces and postscripts. They are here brought together in accessible form.

Abelard and Wyclif are each represented only by a single short paper; but they mark roughly the chronological extent of the studies from the early twelfth to the late fourteenth century and, more significantly, two great cultural changes. Abelard's "first key to wisdom" was a continual questioning. Commenting on an authoritative text from St Augustine, illustrated with a remark of Boethius on Aristotle, he combined an apparent reverence for accepted authority with originality in treatment. Rhetoric and dialectic, pressed into the service of philosophy, became the framework of early scholasticism. Wyclif also appealed to the past, and also innovated, but no longer in a rational, scholastic way. His writing, taking the form of spiritual commentary, was a complete break both with the pre-Abelardian tradition of monastic piety (which had continued in some biblical commentaries throughout the whole period) and with scholastic theology. Whatever his future influence might be, his interpretation of biblical texts was arbitrary and tendentious in a way that was wholly new.

One consequence of the development of scholastic thought was the separation of theology from exegesis. Most of these papers are concerned with the latter. Many of the matters studied were traditional in outlook. But even the most conservative were ready to explore new ways of explaining Scripture, and a few asked questions picked up from philosophers and canonists. If most of their commentaries and sermons were intended for the learned, they sometimes caught echoes of political controversies outside the lecture room.

Varying modes of thought appear in a central problem of exegesis: the interpretation of the Old Testament legal books. Patriotic writings had stressed the spiritual sense of these books; twelfth-century scholars focused more on the literal sense. Following the example of Jerome they revived the practice of questioning Jewish rabbis about their customs: why, for example, should you not boil a kid in the milk of its dam? It was no longer enough to await revelation. Commentators with a new sense of

history tried to explain how the Mosaic code was viable in its own time. The explanation might be hygienic, since eating immature meat boiled in milk was unhealthy; or moral, since showing pity to animals might encourage compassion towards men; or disciplinary, intended to inculcate unquestioning obedience. Some exegetes, like the Benedictine monk Ralph of Flai, still stressed the spiritual sense. He undertook to write a commentary on Leviticus in order to convince his puzzled brethren that Jewish arguments for the permanence of the whole Mosaic law were untenable. To him some precepts had no literal sense; but he drew out the three spiritual senses – allegorical, moral and anagogic – subtly and persuasively. His work remained popular throughout the thirteenth century, and was read in schools and cloisters alike.

William of Auvergne went to the other extreme, and argued that some precepts had no hidden spiritual meaning; Christians no longer needed them when they had the Gospels. Yet to him and his contemporaries the Old Law was a subject of serious study; the twelfth-century search for a "Hebrew truth" was reinforced by the need to refute Cathar heretics, who rejected the Old Testament altogether. William had a historian's curiosity and imagination, combined with some philosophical training; he believed that "the outward observance imposed on the Jews must have echoed the precepts of the law of nature, and have measured up to the standards set by Isidore for good human laws." But he went too far in his reaction against allegory. Most later commentators bypassed him, or refuted him by stressing the literal sense of Scripture, widened to include verbal simile, metaphor, parable and symbolic action. Aquinas summed up the development and gave the best definition: the literal sense included all that the writers meant to express, the spiritual sense depended on the intention of God, and could be made plain by later revelation. He applied his theory of causality: divine and human laws could be explained by the end to which they were directed.

In the main these *Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning* are concerned with matters less well known than the Angelic Doctor, but interesting in their diversity. They include the Franciscan John Russel, writing in the 1290s; and William of Nottingham II, the exponent of Clement of Llanthony's popular gospel harmony. Both belonged to the older tradition that concentrated on *lectio divina* and made no use of natural science or observation of the contemporary world. Some preachers to the University of Oxford were equally moderate and conservative; their learned sermons addressed to scholars, contained hardly any echo of the great theological issues that divided the universities. Others had more political and philosophical interests. John of Baconthorpe, best known as canonist, made great use of canon law in his scriptural commentaries. He was deeply concerned with contemporary issues: a "little man" who supported a Pope John XXII, wholeheartedly, "the put a punch into the Gospels". John de Heiden, remembered for his dispute with Petrarca on the Avignon papacy, was also a biblical commentator, but not an inflammatory one. A Thomist, with a taste for history, he admired Abelard and Gilbert de la Porée as founders of scholastic theology, but avoided direct political comment, apart from complaining that few prelates of his day would follow Thomas of Canterbury in braving death for ecclesiastical freedom.

These are scholarly papers, giving detailed descriptions of manuscripts and lengthy citations. But they are short, written with vivid comments on the meaning for individuals of particular points in theology and exegesis. Like Maitland, who brought to life the technicalities of legal procedure through the men and women involved in particular cases, Beryl Smalley illuminates medieval exegesis by looking into the ideas, perplexities and achievements of individual masters. No one reading this book could doubt the richness and diversity of medieval studies of the Bible.

Between Alfonsos

R. A. Fletcher

Bernard F. Reilly

The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126
401pp. Guildford: Princeton
University Press. £23.
0 691 05344 8

Urraca was the earliest of a trio of women who attempted to rule as queens in their own right in the male-dominated world of twelfth-century feudalism. Matilda hardly got a look in as queen of England against the usurper Stephen; Queen Melisende of Jerusalem did not get much of a run for her money; but Urraca sat on the throne of León-Castilla for nearly seven eventful years. This period has traditionally been portrayed as one of unmitigated disaster – civil war, external aggression, governmental incompetence, social unrest, economic disruption; an unhappy interlude, about which the less said the better, between the glorious reigns of Alfonso VI (1065-1109) and Alfonso VII (1126-1157). This is partly because the principal contemporary chronicler, Gerald of Beauvais, writing in the *Historia Compostellana* – and reflecting the views of his master, the great archbishop Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela – both despised the queen and indulged to full in what Gibbon unforgettably called "the natural pessimism of sacred oratory." And it is partly owing to the prejudices of the romantic, nationalist, Castilian historiography of the nineteenth century, prejudices which still continue to show signs of life: the failure of Urraca's marriage to the king of Aragon ruled out her playing Isabella to his Ferdinand, and "postponed" the political unification of the Iberian peninsula for four centuries.

Bernard F. Reilly's terse though remarkably good-tempered dismissal of such rubbish is not the least of the virtues of his book. Here for the first time we have a thorough, critical, balanced and impartial account of Urraca's reign: who mattered, how things worked and what happened when. The chapters of narrative which make up the first half of the book are

the most ambitious, in the sense that the sources for the reign of Urraca are not of such a kind as to encourage this sort of treatment. Contemporary chroniclers are exceedingly few, and only incidentally concerned with the queen's doings. So the historian is flung back on to the evidence of royal and other charters. (Urraca's charters have never been systematically edited; Reilly's footnotes now provide the best available guide to them.) But charters – even when dated, like Spanish ones, and often containing such useful incidental information – are notoriously slippery materials with which to reconstruct political narrative. Some of Reilly's assumptions in exploiting this evidence, and some of the detailed conclusions which he draws from it, are open to question; but this is bound to be so in any pioneering study of this kind.

The second half of the book deals analytically with the institutions of government and the people who ran them. Thus, Reilly surveys the royal court and household, the chancery, the bishops, local officials such as counts, castellans and *merinos*, coinage and taxation, military and judicial arrangements, the administration of towns. Apart from a few dazzling glimpses of the obvious – as when he assures us on p. 309 that the queen's policies "were designed to make royal governance effective within pragmatic parameters and to increase its local effectiveness when the chance offered" – there is much of great interest that emerges from this process of careful sifting of widely scattered and little-known materials.

The traditional Urraca, largely derived from Gerald of Beauvais, was by turns capricious and vindictive, selfish and indecisive. Under Reilly's skilful treatment a different and far more credible ruler begins to take shape: tenacious, resourceful and shrewd, capable of decisive action, a worthy successor to (and with a far harder task than) the father, Alfonso VI, to whose memory she seems to have been so devoted. But the emphasis has to be on "begins". This book reminds one yet again that the historian of twelfth-century Spain labours under severe handicaps in comparison with, say, the historian of

England at the same period. As Reilly points out, Urraca has left us little charters to Henry I's 1500-odd, the contemporaries, no Domestics, no Roll, no *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*. He can draw on the tradition of local historical scholarship for the great antiquaries of the seventeenth-century Spain, but has no worthy successors. We're stuck, going to know all that much about Queen Urraca or her government. It is true that later documents will emerge as Spanish archives are (at long last) explored, even perhaps catalogued. However, discovery of the lost works of a Spanish Orderic Vitalis – these are not likely to be either numerous or different from what we have already, in other words, Reilly's Urraca is likely to be the field for a long time to come.

Could it be bettered? On its own terms probably not (though the book could have been improved here and there). It is a heroic achievement in itself to have broken away from the credulous mythology which under Spanish dispensation has for so long been allowed to stand for the history of Urraca's reign. I suspect that our understanding of Spanish history in this and many other periods will be most fruitfully advanced when we can forget the Pyrenees. We might better place to understand the kingdom if we came to it from Siles Germany or Anglo-Norman Spain or Capetian France or Norman Italy. This was first pointed out, to my knowledge, by Stubbs, over a century ago. But no one paid him much attention (though he did, interestingly enough, have a few disciples in Spain, precisely because of the tyranny of the idea of "the nation-state"). It is ironic to reflect that the version of Urraca's reign which we have received at the hands of the traditional historians who seem to have impeded progress towards her consent is identified as the uniquely defective that it is. It is ironic to reflect that the version of Spain is one country has been responsible for most of the ill that have beset that unhappy land for almost five centuries or so. But that is another story.

Signs of improvement

Nicholas Phillipson

R. H. CAMPBELL and
A. S. SKINNER (Editors)

The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment
231pp. Edinburgh: John Donald.
£15.
0 86976 076 6

R. H. CAMPBELL and
A. S. SKINNER

231pp. Croom Helm. £12.95.
0 7099 0729 X

The term "Scottish Enlightenment" is fairly new but the game of interpreting the remarkable intellectual history of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scotland is not. Victorian evangelicals saw polite Scottish learning as a new, brilliant and perverse materialism which threatened to corrupt manners, morals and religion and encourage the spread of scepticism, metaphysical anxiety and unhappiness. Cultural patriots, preoccupied with the anglicization of their national culture, have preferred to think of Scottish intellectual achievement in terms of a creative tension between English and Scottish culture. Historians of the social sciences, Marxist and non-Marxist alike, have explored Scottish moral philosophy and history for evidence of the roots of the modern social sciences. Finally, and with awesome prolixity, liberal American academics have ransacked the lives and works of the Scottish literati in order to lay bare the flesh of a humane, liberal and innovative culture conducted by cheerful, moderate men who were equally at home in the worlds of affairs and learning.

The trouble is that so much of this interest in the Scottish Enlightenment has had ideological roots. Evangelicals wanted sticks with which to beat moderate presbyterians. Cultural patriots want to resolve the cultural

dilemmas of their own age. Historians of the social sciences have looked for means of legitimizing their own disciplines. Liberal Americans, at war with academic over-specialization, want to assert the relevance of human learning to modern life. The result has been to complicate the problem of writing an intelligible, objective history of the Scottish Enlightenment, for each ideological interest has generated its own system of scholarship, designed to make ideological rather than historical sense of a remarkable event in the cultural history of the West.

One wonders what it takes to break such historiographical moulds and it is for this reason that a book called *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* sounds so appealing. Unfortunately this one is most disappointing: it is a collection of twelve essays by different authors, for the most part, skirt round problems of definition and interpretation. The design of the book is open to question. Two otherwise admirable essays on the management of the Scottish economy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by R. H. Campbell and T. M. Devine throw no light whatsoever on intellectual discourse or on the circumstances in which it was conducted. The essays on university reform are uninformative and superficial. Essays which discuss the attitudes of the kirk to intellectual debate and discuss the progress of Scottish jurisprudence are thin and retreat before different sources. T. D. Campbell's useful discussion of Hutcheson's moral epistemology and its implications for his political theory, S. R. Sutherland's careful and curious discussion of possible seventeenth-century presbyterian points of reference for Hume's interest in natural theology, and K. Haakonssen's useful summary of his views about Smith's natural jurisprudence belong in specialist journals, not in a book with a title such as this.

The design and execution of the book suggest that the editors and contributors felt uneasy about giving serious thought to the problem of

defining the Scottish enlightenment. What definitions there are are minimal, generalized and unsystematic. Some authors seem to think of the Scottish enlightenment simply in terms of some sort of "spirit of improvement" which was at work in Scottish society at last and demonstrates, incidentally, that Scotland was not as "backward" as Hugh Trevor-Roper thinks. Others simply hide behind the age-old belief that the enlightenment has something to do with a tension between religious orthodoxy, rooted in faith or reason, and an understanding of human nature rooted in experience and sentiment, a truism which is meaningless unless it is examined with care and precision. Only Arthur Donovan and Duncan Forbes show any disposition to analyse the language of scientific and philosophical investigation, Donovan by carefully summarizing his important account of the evolution of the Scottish enquiry into the principles of chemistry, Forbes by means of a pungent, original and committed essay on natural law and the Scottish enlightenment.

This essay deserves serious attention. Forbes suggests that the Scottish investigation into what Hume called "the Science of Man" is best seen in the context of a radical Scottish attempt to reconstruct the entire fabric of the natural jurisprudence of Grotius and Pufendorf which played so vital a part in shaping contemporary ideas about morality, justice and religion. Hume comes over as the great innovator who developed "a wholly secular and one-dimensional theory of justice" to replace the rationalist edifice and the system of natural theology on which it rested. It was on these foundations that Kames, Smith and Millar set out to construct a new system of natural jurisprudence, developing in the process the system of psychology, sociology and history for which the Scots have become so famous. But the great project was never completed. Indeed the whole exercise was, shortly discredited by Dugald Stewart on the grounds that it was dangerous to morals, religion and good government. Nevertheless, what

matters, says Forbes, is "the glimpse of possible new and sounder foundations for something regarded all through the history of western civilization, as essential to decent living". Forbes's discussion is inevitably schematic and selective – what, one wonders, will he make of the literati's parallel and consuming interest in ideas of duty and virtue which are expressed in the language of civic humanism? But his essay is exactly the sort of investigation that is needed if we are ever to have a properly historical account of the origins and nature of the Scottish enlightenment.

Campbell and Skinner's second volume, an introduction to the life and works of Adam Smith, is very much more welcome. It is lucid, superbly well informed and written with the assurance and authority one expects of two scholars who have done so much to shape Smith scholarship in recent years. The biographical chapters are particularly good and will be of interest to scholars as well as to the laymen for whom the book is intended.

Smith is a notoriously difficult biographical subject. He was a poor correspondent and made things worse by having his papers burned after his death. A common but tiresome characteristic of a Scottish literatus, Campbell and Skinner have done wonders with what he left – particularly in their treatment of his early years and his professional career at Glasgow. In the process they manage to establish the important critical point that Smith's account of the dynamics of economic growth in a commercial economy could not possibly be a simple extrapolation of the history of the remarkable economic expansion of Glasgow. For Glasgow's success depended, in the last resort, upon its merchants exploiting the trading restrictions built into the mercantilist system which Smith so passionately denounced. The art of biography is governed by a harsh law which says that the less you understand the subject in which your hero lives, the more overloaded with undigested circumstantial detail your narrative

will be. It is a law that has taken a heavy toll of biographies of the Scottish literati in recent years. It requires scholarship and understanding of a high order to be able to write with the brevity and clarity Campbell and Skinner show in these chapters.

The chapters on Smith's writings come off less well. Like the others, they are aimed at those who are likely to know something about Smith's economic theory – or what passes for it in modern text-books – and want to know something about his other writings. The authors certainly succeed in demonstrating his remarkable intellectual range in the sense that they provide fairly comprehensive summaries of his ideas about the principles of rhetoric, morality, justice and scientific discovery, as well as political economy. But these chapters are curiously heavy going and seem uncomfortably static by contrast with the easy narrative flow of the biographical chapters. The reason is that the authors have tackled his writings work by work, summarizing his conclusions in a language which may be familiar to us but was not so to Smith. This take-it-or-leave-it discussion has the effect of fragmenting Smith's thought and gives little idea of the evolution of his distinctive style of thinking about the Science of Man.

In his splendid essay *The Origin and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment*, discussed earlier, Duncan Forbes suggests Smith's thought ought to be seen in the context of a heroic, Humean attempt to construct a new system of natural jurisprudence. Such a suggestion, pregnant though it may be, would be too speculative at the moment for Campbell and Skinner and out of place in a book designed for laymen. Nevertheless, an account of his thinking which tried to see its architecture on his own terms rather than ours would surely be the most effective possible way to make economic enthusiasts who insist on taking Smith's name in vain think carefully about what he was really saying.

Between brilliances

Bryan Ward-Perkins

C. J. Wickham

Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society 400-1000
238pp. Macmillan. £12 (paperback, £4.95).
0 333 26671 4

The aim of C. J. Wickham's book is to look at Italy in the period 400-1000 AD, other than in the reflected brightness of its past and future. This is not an easy task – partly because the achievements of Italy, under the Romans and in later medieval centuries were so remarkable, partly because the early medieval shaping of the peninsula then, for example, the Anglo-Saxon centuries, are so much a part of British history. It is all too easy to slip into a mode of thought that sees the period 400-1000 only in terms of past, or in terms of the developments that were to bear fruit from the twelfth century onwards. Dr Wickham manages successfully to keep his eye on both past and future, by the early Middle Ages, such as the rise and fall of the North Italian cities, or the perennial Italian history, such as the relationship between town and country.

The book contains sections of basic as a framework, leading us from the Roman Empire to the world of the late antique city-communities. These sections have some useful and interesting comment: for example, they demolish

the supposed role in Lombard dynastic politics of German and Arian sentiment and contrast Roman and Catholic ideals. But the political narrative is not the book's strong point. In part this is not Wickham's fault. Early medieval Italy produced no historians of the stature of Gregory of Tours, Bede, Einhard or Asser, and it is therefore hard to reconstruct the political intrigue of the period in any detail. But it is also true that the author's dense and argumentative style serves this function very well, and adds a substantial addition to the meagre material on the subject available in English.

Wickham deliberately omits the papacy and the church (except as a landlord). The omission of the church is undoubtedly correct, since so much has been written in English on the subject (by Ullmann, Barraclough, Llewellyn and Richards). The omission of the church in general is understandable, but more regrettable. It is obviously too massive a subject for a detailed treatment, but there is a little on it in English, and I would like to have seen some treatment of the people who entered the secular and monastic church, and of how they performed their religious functions within the community.

Finally, I must praise the excellent maps and tables, the useful bibliography and the existence of a paperback edition that is pleasant to handle and to read, and, comparatively cheap.

POSTAGE: INLAND 15p. ABROAD 1p.
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Visions of conformity

Gordon Donaldson

George R. Hewitt

Scotland under Morton 1572-80
232pp. Edinburgh: John Donald.
£14.
0 85976 0774

The standing of James Douglas, Earl of Morton, among the aristocratic leaders of the Scottish Reformation has had to compete with that of James Stewart, Earl of Moray, to whom an adventitious glamour attaches as half-brother of Mary, Queen of Scots. But Moray ruled Scotland for only two and a half years, whereas Morton held undisputed sway for six and gave the country its longest spell of stable government for a generation.

George R. Hewitt, in the first full-length study of the subject, deals in three chronological chapters with the end of the war between the supporters of Queen Mary and those of her son and with Morton's treatment of his former enemies as well as his friends. It is sometimes left to the reader to detect too much about the border wardens who purposefully patronage was used for instance: when Morton chose as chancellor Lord Glamis, the first chancellor in the century who was neither archbishop nor earl, was he primarily seeking ability? Equally, when he appointed Lord Maxwell as a border warden was he merely prepared to overlook Maxwell's former attachment to Mary or was he rewarding a switch of allegiance? And how would qualified compliment: Hewitt would probably agree. Apart from Aberdeen and the Borders, the outlying parts of the country did not feel the regent's hand, and the West Highlands, which hardly figure in the story at all, may have been dismissed as ungovernable. Morton, who held office until he was over sixty, was older than any ruler of Scotland had been for generations, and seemed wise with time through the 1570s. The kind of analysis done by others for earlier years and

demonstrates how the restoration of a measure of lay control over ecclesiastical finance rescued it from the mess into which it had been plunged by an experiment in clerical control. Morton died up many loose ends left over since the Reformation and criticism of him is shown to have been largely unjust. But in 1574 Andrew Melville came on the scene with his "concepts and overseas dreams" to challenge Morton's vision of "conformity with England", and issues were soon raised which were not finally laid to rest until the 1920s.

In the chapters on domestic administration many questions are left unanswered. We learn a lot about finance, but it is not easy to disentangle the transactions of the man James Douglas from those of his government. The arrangements for gold-mining almost suggest what would now be called a mixed economy. A hint that the regent was "bypassing the treasury" and lining his own pocket merits elaboration, especially in relation to the silence of official record about the compositions normally paid for gifts under the privy seal. We hear too much about the border wardens and their salaries and too little about the machinery for enforcing order. Morton's institution of a border police force of infantry and cavalry looks like the device for which James VI is usually been given the credit.

Contemporary official opinion was that under Morton the land enjoyed "a reasonable quietness and rest" and with that qualified compliment: Hewitt would probably agree. Apart from Aberdeen and the Borders, the outlying parts of the country did not feel the regent's hand, and the West Highlands, which hardly figure in the story at all, may have been dismissed as ungovernable. Morton, who held office until he was over sixty, was older than any ruler of Scotland had been for generations, and seemed wise with time through the 1570s. The kind of analysis done by others for earlier years and

peace until half a dozen of Melville's followers had been hanged or banished, but all he did was to procrastinate. The impression grows that he was at the best feared rather than loved and that latterly he was not even feared.

The book should have been called "Morton's government of Scotland", for it gives no picture of the life of the nation. Hewitt has no time for industrial developments except when legislation dealt with "mere" economic matters, and ignores the nine-tenths of the people who lived in the countryside and surely benefited by "a reasonable quietness" (and also, some think, by better weather).

On Morton's character there are only tantalizing references to conflicting qualities of "crafty caution", irascibility, ostentation, "a morbid sense of humour" and harshness. It is credible that lack of tact did more than sound policies to create the enemies who blackened his memory. Not enough is made of Morton's anglophile leanings, which, partly inherited and partly reinforced by two periods of residence in England as well as some shorter visits, may have made the man as anglicized as John Knox.

The book is sometimes laboured and repetitive, information is given in the narrative chapters which could have been deployed with effect elsewhere, individuals and incidents make their appearance without introduction or explanation and sometimes without mention in the index (where the Fleming Petenep appears as the Balliol pay his homage for the Kingdom of Scotland and secured that domain: job). Thereafter, by manipulating feudal law, to make Balliol's situation intolerably humiliating, he drove Scotland to revolt, so that his war of conquest could be represented as lawful suppression of rebellion. He met resistance far surpassing his expectations.

Fruits of opportunism

Caroline Bingham

Ronald McNair Scott

Robert the Bruce: King of Scots
254pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.
0 09 149630 6

On a stormy night of March 1286 the Scots ridden by Alexander III, King of Scots, stumbled on a cliff path and hurled him to his death. In 1375 John Barbour began the narrative of his epic poem *The Bruce* with the lines (translated here by A. A. H. Douglas):
When good King Alexander died,
That Scotland had as leader and guide,
Six years and more the country lay
In desolation after his day:
Until at last the barons went
To an assembly with intent
To choose a king.

There were thirteen claimants – aptly named "Competitors" – to the throne of Scotland, and Edward I of England, erstwhile brother-in-law of Alexander III, was invited to act as arbitrator. Through the ensuing birth of politics and war Ronald McNair Scott leads the reader with a clear thread of narrative. He explains the steps by which Edward I, with the conquest of Scotland as his objective, exploited his advantage, moving from the position of apparently impartial arbitrator to that of arbiter of the fate of Scotland. Edward demanded that the Competitors acknowledge him their feudal overlord, and having secured this position, made a scrupulously fair decision in favour of the weak-willed John Balliol. He then demanded that Balliol pay him homage for the Kingdom of Scotland, and secured that homage: job. Thereafter, by manipulating feudal law, to make Balliol's situation intolerably humiliating, he drove Scotland to revolt, so that his war of conquest could be represented as lawful suppression of rebellion. He met resistance far surpassing his expectations.

Scott narrates these preliminaries in some detail in order to explain the emergence of Robert the Bruce (grandson of the strongest unsuccessful Competitor) as the Patriot King. Bruce, after a couple of changes of heart, became the leader of Scottish resistance, in succession to William Wallace. Bruce was crowned as Robert I on March 25, 1306, in such desperate circumstances that he was no more than a crowned fugitive. He was fortunate in the death of Edward I in 1307, for Edward II was a far less formidable enemy. Nonetheless, Edward II had able generals, notably Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, by whom the vast resources of England were efficiently deployed against the resurgent Scotland. But Robert's astonishing victory at Bannockburn in 1314 was the turning point of the war. The Treaty of Edinburgh (or Northampton) of 1328 – by which he won English recognition of Scotland's independence and his own kingship, the year before his death – was its triumphant conclusion.

Scott describes Bruce's progression from aristocratic opportunist to Patriot King convincingly, but with only a little charitable criticism of the veiled criticisms of his early career. His portrayal of the King's character is respectful and admiring, though too encomiastic to achieve much light and shade. *Robert the Bruce* is biographical history rather than the portrait of a man; and historical biography needs to be both. However, as biographical history, it is addressed – it succeeds for the reader with no previous knowledge of the period will find this book perfectly comprehensible. Scott possesses the most excellent gift of clarity.

The Party-Coloured Mind: Prose relating to the Conflict of Church and State in Seventeenth-Century Scotland edited by David Reid, has recently been published (221pp. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. £7.50. 0 9073 0904 1).

Socialists and nationalists

Robert Wistrich

J. L. TALMON

The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution: The Origins of Ideological Polarization in the Twentieth Century
632pp. Secker and Warburg. £15.00
0 436 51399 4

Nationalism and socialism have undoubtedly been among the central ideological themes of modern history, whether in conflict or as intertwining doctrines. Both ideologies took root in the aftermath of the French Revolution and have flourished in the era of mass politics unleashed by industrialism, modernization and popular democracy. To a certain extent they shared a common quest for community in reaction against the alienation engendered by the impersonal, mechanized world of industrialism and the prevailing economic individualism of bourgeois society. Until 1848, broadly speaking, nationalism and socialism complemented one another, drawing sustenance from their common assault on the Holy Alliance and their common allegiance to the universalist Jacobin ideas of liberty, equality, popular sovereignty and the brotherhood of peoples.

The terms "Revolution", "République" and "Patrie" born in the upheaval of 1789 in France and embodied in the doctrine of national self-determination, came to be seen as interchangeable, especially on the Left. The romantic, idealistic nationalism of the first half of the nineteenth century, no less than the emerging socialist ideology, insisted on the oneness of universal history and an imminent *dénuement* of a salvational character. Such was the nationalism of Rousseau, Fichte and Herder, Michelet, Mazzini, Moses Hess, of Mickiewicz and the Polish exiles.

Our understanding of the dialectic between uniqueness and universality – of the messianic aspirations underlying the early nationalist philosophies and of the seeds of totalitarianism contained in the salvational creed of the French Revolution – owes much to the work of the Israeli historian, the late Jacob Talmont. In two of his preceding books, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* and *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase*, Talmont explored with both passion and verve, the dangers of messianic revolutionism as legitimizing the use of terror to install the millennium. The present study, a vast, sprawling volume of over 600 pages, was conceived as the consummation of his life-work, investigating the ideological polarization that brought forth the twin monsters of Communism and Fascism/Nazism. As a historian, Talmont is fully committed to the belief that ideas, ideals and ideologies play a decisive role in politics, and one who was acutely sensitive to their potentially destructive consequences (in the hands of fanatical demagogues, Talmont was particularly well equipped to undertake his formidable task. Yet for all the flashes of brilliance and imaginative illumination in the present work, one cannot suppress a feeling of disappointment at the end result: a sense that the all-encompassing synthesis "the wise teaching" for has ended his grasp.

In part this may be due to the lack of a clear guiding thread in a book which constantly attracts and repels such fascinating byways as nineteenth-century Russian political thought, the Prussian myth, Austrian nationality problems, Rosa Luxemburg and the SPD, the Jewish dimension or early fascism from Sorel to Mussolini, without ever pulling together these suggestive strands into a comprehensible whole. Partly it may be the result of too disembodied an approach to the history of ideas, which disconnects them from their roots in European social and economic history, and lacks a sufficiently solid grounding in empirical research; at times, too, it is difficult to resist the feeling that rhetorical exaggeration and straining for effect have overcome the requirements of careful analysis and the critical examination of the author's unspoken assumptions. Over and above these weaknesses (which were

also present, though to a lesser extent, in Talmont's earlier work) there is the more serious matter of a fundamentally flawed thesis, namely, that the gulf between the national myth and the vision of international revolution was the central schism within the European socialist movement at the turn of the century. Although only fitfully adhered to and followed through, this is indeed Talmont's most important claim, around which everything else ultimately revolves.

Both totalitarian Communism and National Socialism are seen as heirs of the split between revolutionary radicalism and reformism, between the orthodox Marxist perspective of a universal proletarian breakthrough and the "revisionist" acceptance of the historic-nationalist community as a natural framework for social change. Not only does this assertion exaggerate the importance of the national question for the pre-1914 socialist movement and misread the main lines of cleavage engendered by the revisionist controversy in early twentieth-century European socialism; taken to its logical conclusion it could imply that Leninist-Stalinist totalitarianism derived from or was typologically akin to the proletarian internationalism of Rosa Luxemburg and that Fascism/Nazism somehow drew on the revision of Marxism undertaken by Eduard Bernstein, that unjustly neglected founding-father of modern European Social Democracy. Naturally, Talmont was far too sophisticated a historian to make such a crude causal connection, yet his analysis of the ideological polarization within European Marxism almost suggests as much.

He is on much more solid ground in the early part of the book in viewing 1848 as the fatal watershed which broke the hitherto indisputable connection between nationalism, liberal democracy and the socialist belief in the *fraternité* of free peoples rising against the *ancien régime*. The "Springtime of the Peoples" brutally exposed the gulf between the so-called "historic" nations (Germans, Magyars, Poles) and the "unhistoric" nationalities (Czechs, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Romanians, etc.) in Eastern Europe, and fatally undermined the prospects for a unified Germany under liberal hegemony. The revolutionary-democratic dream of the Italian Risorgimento, Marx and Engels, shrewd observers of the contemporary scene, though not immune to the prevailing Slavophobia of their radical German contemporaries, nevertheless drew characteristically brutal conclusions. True to their conviction that national aspirations were to be measured by the struggle of the global revolutionary movement, they vehemently denounced the counter-revolutionary role of the Slav "barbarians" who had lent a helping hand to the Austrian armies in crushing the rising in Vienna and Northern Italy.

Their hatred of Pan-Slavism was further nourished by Slav support for the Russian repression of the Magyars, depicted by Engels as a "virile, expanding nation with a thousand years of history to testify to its civilizing mission. Neither Marx nor Engels had much time for the nationalism of Czechs, Serbs, Bulgars, Slovenes or Ukrainians, small, weak nationalities who could be discounted as fossils standing in the way of historical progress. Slavdom had betrayed the Revolution, hence these pastoral, pig-keeping tribes without urban life, a developed social structure, political institutions or national independence. National self-determination was not a question of morality or justice but of power, the privilege of the strong and successful whose historic vitality also happened to coincide with the cause of "civilization" against feudal particularism. Only Polish nobility, stood out as an exception in the mind of Marx and Engels. Here was a lever against the hated Russian reaction, a bulwark of the West against Tsarist absolutism and an ally in the struggle for the democratic liberation

and unification of Germany. If the Poles had a duty to be nationalist before they could engage in social transformation, this was also true of the Irish, whose national emancipation, according to Karl Marx in the 1860s, would ultimately ruin the British ruling class and shake British capitalism to its foundations. As in the case of Poland, the interest in Irish national liberation was primarily tactical – a thrust against the weakest link in the British Empire and the bastion of world capitalism. The founders of Marxism simply took no interest in nationalism *per se*, in the formation of national consciousness and sentiment, common language or culture, in the influence of religion and ethnicity, etc.

The nation-state was admittedly accepted as a political fact and a framework for the "rule of the bourgeoisie" in large, capitalist states, but not as a universal phenomenon, resulting from historical necessities. As a consequence, latter-day Marxists like Karl Kautsky (whose importance is unaccountably underestimated by Talmont), Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin and the Austrian school of Renner and Otto Bauer were left with a difficult task in wrestling with the growing national conflicts in turn-of-the-century Europe. Orthodox Marxists continued to regard nationalism as merely a transitional phase, a means to an end, with no real staying power of its own. Their distrust of it was if anything heightened by its increasing identification after 1880 with imperialism, racism, antisemitism and the radical Right. Moreover, the obvious attractions of nationalism to the anti-liberal lower middle-classes and its potential efficacy as a means of mobilizing the masses and integrating them into the "system" could not be ignored.

Some Marxists, like Rosa Luxemburg, continued to cling to the vision of class struggle on a planetary scale and a socialist world society as a sufficient counterweight to the "myth" of the nation. Talmont dwells at great length on her bitter struggle against the doctrine of national self-determination, and especially against the restoration of Poland independence. But in a rather uncritical manner. Certainly no other Marxist (not even Lenin or Trotsky) shared to the same extent her messianic, catastrophist vision of a global confrontation between capitalism and socialism and her belief that the age of imperialism had rendered the existence of small nation-states obsolete.

Nevertheless Talmont exaggerates her impact, overlooks the dogmatism and economic reductionism in her analysis and her blindness to the revolutionary potential of national liberation movements in the twentieth century. In clinging to the classical Marxist belief that only class struggle and not the nation could be the *content* of revolutionary activity, Luxemburg may well misread the power of national feeling and consciousness, not only in Poland and Russia, but also in Imperial Germany. The support of the SPD for *Weltpolitik* and colonial policy, for Germanizing the Polish minority in its borders etc., was not simply due to leadership, as he claimed, but a response to the instinctive patriotism of the German working classes.

The collapse of the Second International, in 1914, revealed the strength of this patriotism in all the belligerent nations, and the desire to be rid of the stigma of being labelled as "reactionary" or "unpatriotic" by the ruling classes. Defence of the fatherland (especially against France, Russia) proved a much more powerful internationalism than the dream of socialist internationalism. In Germany, always drawn on the "Lesser Evil" (whose influence was greater than Talmont suggests), just as their counterparts in France could appeal to patriotism which had not been completely committed and militarized by the Versailles and Guiseux.

Talmont's account of the

confrontations with the problem of national identity and organizational separatism, is rather more convincing. The Austrian Social-Democrats saw it as their mission to develop a paradigm of the future international socialist order by working out a constructive solution to the seemingly intractable nationalities' conflict. In a potentially explosive situation of racial-ethnic antagonism, with mounting Slav nationalism confronting a minuscule, beleaguered German-Austrian ruling minority seeking to maintain its hegemony, the Socialists were driven to seek ways to depoliticize the conflict if they were to maintain the multi-national State.

Paradoxically, as they discovered, the processes of modernization and the intrusion of capitalism into backward agrarian regions of the Monarchy were aggravating national tensions between Germans and Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians and Jews, Magyars and Serbo-Croats, Italians and Slovenes. Industrialism and gradual democratization increased the competition for government jobs, in public employment and the free professions as well as stimulating the national-cultural awakening of the Slav peoples. Separatist tendencies in the Czech working-class movement were especially powerful (ultimately destroying the unity of the mini-Austrian International) but they also affected minorities like the Jews whose national movement in both its Zionist and Diasporic dimensions is, astonishingly, ignored by Talmont.

The Austrian socialist struggle to preserve the unity of workers of various nationalities against the virus of ethnic irrationalism ultimately failed but it was a brave attempt which gave birth to the most original Marxist reflection on national questions – that of Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. Their efforts to come to grips with the nation as an ethnic-cultural concept and to defuse the aggressive potential of nationalism through a complex network of territorial, cultural and judicial concessions within a supra-national framework still repay attention. Tragically, it was not to be. For waiting in the wings after the trauma of the First World War was the failed provincial Austrian artist Adolf Hitler, for whom Marxism itself was nothing but a diabolical "Jewish" conspiracy to sap the vitality of the threatened German nation. Talmont's brief discussion of Hitler and his Austrian predecessors (while covering no new ground) is illuminating in so far as it shows how the struggle for and against socialism in Central and Eastern Europe became ominously juxtaposed into a life-and-death confrontation between the mythical "Jew" and the mythical "Aryan".

Talmont's discussion of the intellectual origins of Mussolini's Fascism is much more problematic and sketchy, in spite of the inclusion of a previously published and perceptive essay on Sorel. Certainly in Italy as in France, the decade before the First World War provided numerous examples of those "bastard" syntheses of Left and Right, of nationalism and socialism, which already constituted a kind of "fascisme avant la lettre" so well explored by historians like Zeev Sternhell in his *La Droite Révolutionnaire*. But without a clear account of revolutionary syndicalism; which is conspicuously missing here, Mussolini's transition from left-wing socialism to Fascism simply makes no sense. Moreover, it seems to me a mistake to assume, as Talmont tends to, that fascism was born totalitarian; that it was something static rather than developing in response to a specific situation in war-time Italy. Indeed the similarities (as well as the differences) between Mussolini and Lenin's brief internationalist after 1914 would most likely tell us more about the origins of conventional politics than the approach adopted in this book.

Both Fascism and Bolshevism can, it seems to me, be legitimately seen as "heresies" on the Marxist Left which responded to certain revolutionary imperatives that emerged in Italy and the former-bos of a mutilated victory

and the latter in the chaos of post-military defeat and peasant hunger. Both "heresies" had roots not in "revisionism" but in a revolutionary wing of the movement, in the stress of Lenin and Lenin on creating a new, aspiring to centralized dictatorship, irrespective of whether conditions were ripe. Talmont is doubtless right to emphasize that Fascism built its myth of the nation *not* on the Leninist still clung in theory to the classic Marxist vision of revolution.

But Lenin's tenacious adherence to orthodoxy was soon short-circuited by the reality of "socialism in a backward country" and the isolation of a Russian revolution in a backward country. What Mussolini and Hitler really shared, over and above their own voluntarism, which made them themselves the supreme value, was a determination to break with liberal civilization which had led to the indecipherable map on western Marxism. Both were ready in practice to make use of the war to accelerate the collapse of the old order, to destroy its structures, to create a new reality in order to destroy the old. Their distrust of it was if anything heightened by its increasing identification after 1880 with imperialism, racism, antisemitism and the radical Right. Moreover, the obvious attractions of nationalism to the anti-liberal lower middle-classes and its potential efficacy as a means of mobilizing the masses and integrating them into the "system" could not be ignored.

Certainly there are distinctions made between totalitarian nationalism and totalitarian Marxism as a competition between the two. Yet from our present vantage point, in an age where the two often seem a correspondence between the style of the architecture and the character of its founder, to dislike Philip II is to dislike the Escorial, and to recognize, reflected in its design, those aspects of his character which detractors have repeatedly attributed to him – morbidity, obsessiveness, cruelty and so on. The converse is also

The two latest issues of *Survey of Journal of East and West Studies*, House, 133 Oxford St, London W2, Annual subscription £17, single issue £5) are devoted to a symposium on "Capitalism, Socialism and the State". Leopold Labedz, in his introduction, writes: "The word 'State'... is to contribute to the analysis of these three concepts in the light of the historical experience of East and West". Sections in Part II (113) include "The Closed Society and its Friends" with contributions by Leszek Kolakowski and W. H. R. Inge, "The State Observed" with Domenico Sestemini, "The State and the Industrial Society" with Vladimir Briss, "The Role of the State: West and East" by Sik, "Humane Democracy" and Richard L. P. "Pluralism versus the Communist Weal in the Industrial State". The section contains articles by Andrei (Society, Bureaucracy, Businessmen), Edward S. (Social Ownership of the Means of Production), Alain (Anatomy of a Spectre) and François Revel ("By the Gate of the State"). In Part II (114), Adamkiewicz writes on "State and Society" in Early Socialist Thought, Hanson on "Alexander the Great: Totalitarianism from the East", Giuseppe Are and Otto (The "case studies" of Italy, Japan, and Germany, Britain, Jeffrey W. and Latin America and Korea, Wolferen on Japan.

A thought-provoking palace

Valerie Fraser

GEORGE KUBLER

Building the Escorial
185pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £29.50.

"I advise people who are foolish enough to imagine that they are bored to go and spend three or four days in the Escorial; they will learn there what true weariness is, and they will enjoy themselves all the rest of their lives by merely thinking that they might be in the Escorial and that they are not," wrote Théophile Gautier in 1840, and many others before and since have agreed. Built by Philip II between 1563 and 1585, the Escorial, by any standards one of the most important buildings in Spain, has probably inspired more abusive writing and less serious interest than any other equivalent building in Europe. Until recently there has been a lack of serious interest in Spanish art in general, at least outside Spain, but things are now changing with the help of studies such as George Kubler's *Building the Escorial*, the first full-length monograph on the subject in English, and as far as I know, the first in any language for many years.

The tradition of derogatory writing about the Escorial will probably continue. This building has inspired antipathy in travellers, especially those from northern Europe, because it is stylistically so unexpected, and because it was built by Philip II. Typically, the major architectural tourist attractions of Spain involve startling juxtapositions of styles, and are exuberantly, often exotically decorated, so that the severe austerity and stylistic unity of the Escorial come as a shock and, to many, a deep disappointment. In order to explain its appearance commentators have all too often seen a correspondence between the style of the architecture and the character of its founder, to dislike Philip II is to dislike the Escorial, and to recognize, reflected in its design, those aspects of his character which detractors have repeatedly attributed to him – morbidity, obsessiveness, cruelty and so on. The converse is also

High and higher Gothic

Anthony Blunt

HENRY-RUSSELL HITCHCOCK

German Renaissance Architecture
379pp. plus 457 black-and-white pictures. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £49.90.
0 691 03999 3

This is an exhaustive – and, it must be admitted, at times exhausting – treatment of German architecture from about 1510 to the beginning of the Thirty Years War. Its plates, over 450 in number, not to mention the seventy plans in the text, provide an invaluable visual record of German building activities of the period. The author defines the area that he proposes to cover as the lands that were German in the sixteenth century. For this reason he excludes Hungary and Danzig and only touches lightly on the south-east provinces of the Empire, Carinthia and Styria. These omissions make the picture slightly incomplete, because the early Italianate architecture in the south-east is of a kind not to be found elsewhere in the Empire and in Danzig there are many churches and houses which are among the most important examples of the north-east German style. The text of the book is packed with information, obviously based on personal observation, but also drawing on the vast literature in German dealing with individual buildings or areas. As the author points out in his preface it is surprising that with all this accumulation of detail there should have been no serious synthesis of the subject since the volumes in the *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* and the *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte* and Stange's *Die deutsche Baukunst der Renaissance*, all of which date from the 1920s.

true: those writers who have admired him and have regarded him as devout and disciplined, as firm but fair, have found these features paralleled in the architecture.

But the later historiographical tradition, fascinating though it often is, is not Professor Kubler's main concern: he deals with it in a tantalizingly brief introductory chapter. Nor is he concerned with the Escorial's subsequent influence. It was in fact to have few direct heirs, although "escoriallesque" stylistic details travelled fast and far – to the facade of the church of San Francisco in Quito, Ecuador, by the early 1580s, for example. In his preface Kubler states that his method is to connect building history with architectural criticism, but in fact the emphasis is quite firmly on the former; *Building the Escorial* is about just that.

The Escorial must be one of the best-documented building projects ever and Professor Kubler draws on a daunting wealth of published and unpublished

material in tracing its history from its first conception in Philip's mind through the many and various stages of its planning and construction. Within the great granite walls of the Escorial are a church, a monastery, a palace, a hospice, a college, a seminary, a library and a royal mausoleum. This last was always Philip's prime concern, motivated by the desire to provide the body of his father Charles V with an appropriately grand tomb, and the monastery and church were its necessary adjuncts. The design of the church was the most debated (twenty nine plans were sent to the Florentine Academy in 1567 for comment), and the palace itself, perhaps, the least: it seems not even to have been part of Philip's original idea, and it is incorporated both in plan and stylistic detail into the ecclesiastical complex, rather than the other way round.

Professor Kubler's interest is in the whole vast operation – the plans, the materials, the hierarchy of responsibility, the distribution of work and the organization of labour – rather

than in personalities, but nonetheless these emerge, particularly that of the king, Philip is almost always present, issuing instructions, annotating memoranda, inspecting a new machine, intervening in questions of style, changing his mind. While we cannot safely interpret the Escorial through the medium of Philip's character, we can to some extent reverse the operation and use the building to understand the king. The lack of any ceremonial entrance to the palace, the extreme modesty of his private rooms and such details as the inaccessibility ("750 feet distant, including eight turns and one stairway") of the kitchens all testify to his lack of concern for ostentation or personal luxury.

The other crucial figure was the architect Juan de Herrera, though whose energy and versatility work was to progress with tremendous speed after 1572, the year in which he took charge. For example, in 1576 work began on the basilica (with a surprise triumphal entry to mark the arrival

of the Virgin Mary's statue from the Americas), its court and that of the college.

In 1589 Juan de Herrera published in Madrid his *Sumario y breve declaracion de los diseños y estampas de la fabrica de San Lorenzo el Real del Escorial*. Eleven plates of his architectural drawings were printed (nearly all of his original working drawings have disappeared). That reproduced above from the book under review shows the section through the westernmost cloisters. In the centre is the facade of the basilica (with its towers and dome beyond). To its right are the elevations of the north-west and south-west monastery courts, with the terrace to the garden on the south. At the left-hand end is the north terrace, separated here from the basilica by the north range of the Seminary, its court and that of the college.

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from the quarry of the first blocks of stone destined for its walls), and by the beginning of the following year the walls had reached a height of thirty feet, thanks largely to a radical reorganization of labour in which Herrera played an important part; there were problems and set-backs, of course, but the contract for the dome was drawn up in 1579, the dome completed by Easter 1582, and the facade finished early in 1585.

In the final chapter Kubler tackles the question of the ideas behind the Escorial; firmly and, I think, convincingly he dismisses René Taylor's theory that the Escorial embodies a covert magical and astrological programme. In this process one of the eye-witness accounts, by the Escorial's first librarian, the Jeronimite friar José de Sigüenza, is reinstated as a reliable source, and in it Kubler finds an alternative key to the Escorial's meaning: that it represents a visible demonstration of Augustinian aesthetics. That Sigüenza himself may have seen the building in these terms seems, on Kubler's evidence, a possibility, but that others did so is not clear. When discussing the design of the Escorial Sigüenza stresses (and he would not be alone in this) the way that "all its parts imitate one another" and that "the whole is in all the parts", and he includes Augustine as a source for the ideal of "correspondence in architecture". But is it more likely that the architects, and perhaps even the King, would have acquired the notion of an overall architectural unity produced by a harmonious relationship between the parts and the whole in the first instance, not from Augustine, but from Renaissance architectural theory, from Alberti in particular? The reason behind such architectural harmony remains the same in either case: (to use Sigüenza's version of Augustine) "that from the architecture behead by sight may arise other thoughts, more abundant and worthy of harvest by mankind".

This is an important book for the history of architecture: not only in Spain but in Europe as a whole; and it will remain a standard work for years to come. It is a pity, therefore, that careless editing has allowed so many errors and confusions to slip through.

These tall gabled houses run right through the period with so few fundamental changes of style I would defy anyone, except Hitchcock, to call them within, say, thirty or forty years. At the level of more expensive architecture, as in the Ottheinrichsbau and the Friedrichsbau at Heideberg or the Schloss and church at Bückeburg, the Italian details are more conspicuous, and more elaborate – columns, pilasters, pediments and so on – but they are used in a manner which, but, as I said, it's better to forget Italy – and enjoy – the inventiveness, luxuriance and fantasy of the German buildings on their own terms.

E. R. Chamberlin's *The World of the Italian Renaissance* (311pp. Aldine, New York, £12.50, 0 04 900035 7) has been written with "students seeking a comprehensive background guide to the period and for general readers and visitors to Italy who are not catered for by academic publication" in mind. The nine chapters – "The geographical expression", "Florence: the search for the past", "The throne of St Peter", "The patron: of Venice", "The warrior prince", "Domestic interior", "The social matrix", "The Renaissance man", "The golden age" are subdivided under various headings, including "The Florentine humanist", "The House of Medici", "The Renaissance pope", and "Rome, the Golden City". Extensively illustrated with black-and-white photographs, it also contains a comprehensive list of notes and sources.

Freely signifying

Alan Brissenden

JAMES REDMOND (Editor)

Themes in Drama 4: Drama and Symbolism
264pp. Cambridge University Press.
£19.50.
0 521 22181 1

Because its most complete realization is in a dimension beyond print — on stage, screen or radio — drama is favoured among literary forms when it comes to symbolism. And trying to entrap a meaning for that elusive word "symbol", especially in relation to drama, offers much scope for thinking critics.

In the first of these variously provocative essays, collected from a new annual collection on themes in drama, Martin Esslin lucidly attempts to simplify the complex. Ranging from Menander to Max Frisch, Esslin smoothly but energetically argues towards a fundamental: "on the most basic level everything that is put on a stage is a symbol, a sign, a signifier." He is gently shocked that Umberto Eco does not mention theatre or drama in his *Theory of Semiotics*; after reading this paper, future writers on the subject would be foolhardy to make the same mistake.

Just how the stage can be, in Esslin's phrase, a "symbol-producing instrument" is well explored in a discussion of Kabuki by Leonard

Prokko, who begins with Jung's distinction between a symbol as "an indefinite expression with many meanings" and a sign, which "always has a fixed meaning". Dealing with specific examples, Prokko compresses much into this essay, suggestively linking Japanese and Western ideas, particularly in his allusions to symbolist poetry.

The rich ferment of Russian *fin de siècle* culture is evoked in Virginia Bennett's splendid paper on Aleksandr Blok's *The Puppet Show*, produced by Meyerhold in 1906. Reading this relatively slight playlet now, in the translation thoughtfully included, it is not easy to comprehend its startling effect on the first audience, little short of the effect of *The Rite of Spring* at its première in Paris six and a half years later. While mentioning Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, in this exciting essay Bennett misses the larger connection with the Diaghilev Ballet, the way in which Stravinsky, Fokine, Nijinsky and others were vital innovations also, and with a wider audience.

What so delighted or distressed Blok's audience was his deliberate spurning of any attempt to represent life in his drama. Similarly, it was the non-realism of Robert Edmond Jones's designs for *Macbeth* in 1921 that brought sulphurous denunciation from Broadway and its critics. Despite this monumental failure, the abstract symbolism which the production introduced led to a symbolic realism in stage setting which Dana Sue McDermott argues, in her paper on

Jones's *Macbeth*, still dominates American commercial theatre; that is a claim implicitly supported by Kathleen Hulley's rather dogged study of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Hulley overstates an original idea when she declares that "because *Streetcar* is a play about conflicting theatrical productions by the various characters, the action of the stage mirrors the action of the audience watching the play."

In other papers, John Fletcher helps the reader re-create performances in recent French theatre and usefully quotes Beckett as director of his own plays; Arthur E. McGuinness writes earnestly on Pinter's *Old Times*; Linn B. Kourad considers symbolic action in Maelstrom, but without much sparkle; and A. R. Braumüller offers a sober, detailed study of *Hedda Gabler*.

Michael Neill's lively piece on a mournful subject, monuments and ruins in *The Duchess of Malfi*, shows the advantages of a historical awareness and argues elegantly for the play itself being "the finely embellished tomb" from which the echo of the Duchess's memory sounds. In an extensive review, Dennis Bartholomew uses the symbolism of woman-as-doll as a peg for his contention that Australian drama has not "progressed" or "improved" from Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (1956) to the present, as seen in Patrick White's *Big Toys* and Louis Nowra's *Precious Woman*. It may be that no one since has so firmly

and subtly integrated a symbol into a traditionally structured play as Lawler does his kipple doll, but to base an argument for progress solely on that criterion seems unfortunately narrow and makes an unconvincing conclusion to an otherwise well-informed and stimulating study.

The maverick among this academic gathering is the veteran screenwriter and director Ben Maddow (*The Savage Eye*, *The Asphalt Jungle*), who declares that all symbols "should be banned from the armament of an artist. He does not need them." To say this, however, and to say for example that Nora's final speech in *A Doll's House* has been misinterpreted as being the message of the play and even of the playwright, that "it is simply Nora speaking and no one and nothing else", is grossly to over-simplify and to deny the idea of otherness which is at the basis of theatrical performance. Maddow's Catharine-wheel of an article showers plenty of sparks but is inert at the centre.

The collection is rounded off by a knowledgeable but uneven essay on David Daniell's "*Coriolanus*" in *Europe*, a solid review of Silk and Stern's *Nietzsche on Tragedy* and a curiously circular discussion on symbolism in Chekhov. Most readers will consult this handsome and well-illustrated volume for its individual parts. Those who read it through will find their own perceptions of symbolism, and not only symbolism in the theatre, both sharpened and enlarged.

Stonework

Michael Butler

MICHAEL PATTERSON

Peter Stein: Germany's leading theatre director
186pp. Cambridge University Press.
£17.50 (paperback, £5.50).
0 521 2242 X

This study initiates an extensive series on "Directors in Perspective" which aims to assess critically some of those major twentieth-century directors who have helped to create "modern" drama. The essays are placed accordingly on their practice in the theatre rather than on the conventional academic criteria of the plays themselves.

The choice of Peter Stein is an interesting one, since despite his dramatic heritage, West German theatre hardly noted for its breakthroughs in either acting or production techniques, Stein is an exception. Acknowledged by many as an authority than Theresia Giese, "Brecht's immediate successor," he has proved both a worthy and a controversial heir.

By examining in detail a number of key productions over the past years — including Bond's *Saved*, *Die Tasse*, Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, *Die Sommerfalk* (seen at the Theatre in 1977) and Stein's *Midnight* (seen at the Theatre in 1977) — Michael Patterson neatly documents Stein's attempt to marry Brechtian analysis with a more humane quality, to earn him distance from the Establishment and suspicion from the Left. Study of the prompt-books, protocols of rehearsal, videotapes, and first-hand experience has enabled Patterson to reconstruct the major productions with considerable authority.

However, the book is not an exercise in lionization. It is obvious from the introduction to Stein's *Midnight* that the author is not a fan, but a fair-minded critic. Where necessary Patterson is as severe as Stein himself often is in retrospect.

The most interesting section of the book outlines the significance of the experimental *Schaubühne* in Halle, which Stein directed from 1964 to 1970. Patterson sympathetically describes the theatre's inherent in the anomalous position of a politically committed director team working in a private theatre which is dependent on huge public subsidies. He shows how the theatre's "workers' cooperative" had to be progressively modified in order to flourish in West Berlin.

Nevertheless, Racine had a good knowledge of Greek and annotated copies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. The exact nature of his relation to these writers is therefore something of a problem. R. C. Knight has done much to illuminate this issue and he has now followed that work with an edition of four plays which will enable English readers to compare the Greek and French dramatists. The first, *Andromaque*, Racine's first real success, is on a Greek theme, *Iphigénie* and *Phèdre* treat subjects dealt with by Euripides, and the last play, *Athalie*, is included because of its use of a chorus. It is unfortunate that the collection does not include *La Thébaïde*, which is not otherwise available in English. For all its glaring and obvious deficiencies that play, dealing with the enmity of the sons of Oedipus, shows perhaps more vividly than any other how far away Racine was from the Greek writers in handling the same material. The omission seems to be due to two reasons: *Athalie* is a far superior play, and no one today would be interested in perusing *La Thébaïde*. But it must be said that these versions are much more suited to the study than the stage. In the study they will be of considerable value, accompanied as they are by concise introductions and useful notes. On the stage they would seem rather wooden. The translations are in a blank verse which is skilfully handled, but the vocabulary tends to be stilted, at times even archaic, considered in the light of the cruel formality of the original is not always detrimental and there are passages of eloquence and force. But overall, speaking of these versions as "translations" rather than as "adaptations" is to open up new possibilities for the theatre.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

College collections

Paul Quarrie

DENNIS E. RHODES

A Catalogue of Incunabula in all the Libraries of Oxford University
Oxford: Bodleian
1981. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £40.
0 19 818175 2

The College libraries of Oxford and Cambridge are, on the whole, little known. So wrote in 1926 C. H. Wilkinson at the beginning of a paper on Worcester College Library. Since then great advances have been made, and much more is known about the history of particular libraries at specific periods in their history, but there is still much to be done. The only survey of all Oxford libraries outside Bodley is that by Paul Morgan, published first in 1974, and the only modern monograph devoted to an individual library is Sir Edmund Craster's "The history of All Souls' College Library," published in 1971 simultaneously with Neil Ker's study of the same library in the period 1437-1600.

The early years of this century saw in Cambridge the publication of several catalogues of early printed books in the Cambridge college libraries. In 1908 appeared Chawner's catalogue of the Incunabula at King's, which has full reading of *As You Like It* — a series of provenances for one hundred and thirty-eight books; a series of examples listing the holdings of other colleges appeared over the next twenty years. They all originate from the catalogue of the incunabula at Trinity published in 1867 by Robert Sinker. These Cambridge catalogues are constructed on the Proctor method, i.e. the books are grouped by place of printing and by printer, so as to show the development of printing, and are not arranged alphabetically by author. This system works well for large collections; like that of the British Library, Dennis E. Rhodes's home ground, where the intention is to study the development of printing, but is plainly unsuited to small collections. Its most recent large-scale use is in the catalogue of the incunabula in Cambridge University Library by J. C. Oates, published in 1954.

Rhodes in his new catalogue, like Frederick Goff in his *Incunabula in American Libraries* and like the great German *Gesamtkatalog*, opts for the author approach. The reasons for this in the case of college libraries are obvious. The total number of editions which is dependent on huge public subsidies, and what is of interest is not so much where they were printed, or by whom, but what titles are to be found, when and by whom they were acquired and from where. This last can of course be closely connected with the place and date of printing, as in the case of the *Wittenberg editio princeps*, printed (anonymously) in Rome by Eucharius Silber "before August 16, 1487", the date of purchase recorded in the copy bought in Rome by Blaeu. John Shirwood, in the library at Corpus, Rhodes sets out for each book a brief title, with details, where necessary, of the author or commentator, the imprint, references to standard repertoires, the location of the copy or copies, with press-marks (a desirable inclusion), notes on any imperfections and finally details of provenance. Sometimes he gives details of bindings but in his introduction he carefully qualifies his expertise in this field. Where a book is recorded or not properly described elsewhere, he gives a detailed description, and it is amazing how, in a well-worked field as this, *Incunabulaforschung* has many new items turn up, as in the case of the *Seculum Rosarii Mariae Virginis*, printed at Linburg in Hanover by Johann Luce in 1495, one of two dated books (the other an *Imitatio Christi*) from this press (which is, incidentally, the standard work on the German printers of the fifteenth century by Ferdinand Geldner).

The author approach enables one to get at a glance the forty-six entries devoted to Cicero from a variety of sources, mostly Venetian, nine of which are editions of the *De officiis*, or the devoted to the jurist Bartolus de Serravalle, early law books are

particularly well represented in Oxford; sometimes, as in the case of the legal writings of Lancelotti Decius, a professor of Roman Law at Pavia and Pisa, who died in 1503, a whole range of work not represented in the great national collections is to be found.

As one might expect, books in the vernacular are few: there are under twenty in English, ten in French, five in German, three in Dutch, two in Spanish, and forty-six in Italian, most of these last traces by Savonarola, but with several editions of the *Divina Commedia* (the 1477 Venice edition printed by Wendelin of Speier does have the commentary of Jacopo da Lana, edited by Cristoforo Berardi, a fact not mentioned by Rhodes). This is exactly what one would expect, and many of these books are nineteenth-century additions, some indeed purchased by the Taylorian. Of the early Greek classics there are many: five copies of the 1488 Homer, eight of the 1494 Apollonius Rhodius and a positive battery of copies (some imperfect) of the Aldine Aristotle, including Thomas Linacre's copy on vellum. Some of these are early acquisitions, and indeed the most representative collection of early Greek printed books is that at Corpus, many of which were given by the founder, Bishop Foxe.

The index of provenances Rhodes has laboured long over, and it makes interesting reading. It comprises brief biographical details, with references, and the numbers of those items given by, or once belonging to, an individual or institutional owner. It is full of fascinating detail: one may learn, for example, that the copy of Savonarola's *Compendio di rivelazione* (Florence, F. Bonaccorsi, August 18, 1495) given to Queen's by A. H. Sayce, once belonged to George Eliot, who bought it in December, 1861, when she was writing *Romola*; or that St Hilda's two incunabula were both presented by Miss Beale (one of them is aptly an edition of "Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*"). For the most part, however, the names are those of Oxford residents, fellows of colleges and others, from Bishop Goldwell to Sir Basil Blackwell. Few books can be traced to the great collections of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: there is no book from the Crevenna library (at the sale of which the Bodleian bought heavily), one book from the Duc de la Vallière's library and one from the huge collection of the Marquis de Morante. It must be remembered that college libraries have always relied for this sort of book on gifts, and not on purchases, and this is as true of the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, as it is of the modern period. Of the 288 incunabula in Queen's, all but ninety are from two substantial gifts, one (Robert Mason's) of money, which, among many other things, bought the only book probably printed by Gutenberg, the Mainz Catholicum, in any Oxford or Cambridge college (only one collegiate library possesses a copy of the 42-line Bible: Eton); the other, of some 120 books from Professor Sayce. Queen's is in fact the only one of the four libraries with most incunabula, All Souls, New College, Queen's and Corpus (which together account for almost half the total number of copies in all the libraries included in this catalogue), to have received such a large proportion of the books so recently.

Dr Rhodes has given us a useful book, with few inaccuracies, and has mapped out the way for catalogues of other classes of books in Oxford libraries. Let us hope that the catalogue of the Bodleian Incunabula will see publication, with a similar attention to details of provenance. Let us also look forward to the day when we in Great Britain will be able to produce a census of incunabula in all British libraries to take its place beside Goff and the Italian *Indice generale degli Incunaboli delle biblioteche d'Italia*. We have some of the finest collections in the world.

The latest issue of the *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, quarterly, \$20 pa. ISSN 0006 128X, includes articles on Samuel Johnson and the Eighteenth-Century Irish Book Trade, and letters from W. D. O'Connor to Moncreu Conway.

Decoration Delhi-style

Toby Falk

JEREMIAH P. LOSTY

The Art of the Book in India
160pp. British Library. £17.95.
0 904654 78 8

This book coincided with, and catalogued, the exhibition *The Art of the Book in India* which was the British Library's contribution to the Festival of India. The one hundred and forty manuscripts exhibited were selected as representative examples of the significant types of decorated Indian manuscript from the tenth to the nineteenth centuries. The necessity to include the scriptures of Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim India, together with a wide variety of related historical, biographical and literary works, made this a formidable undertaking. It has nevertheless been authoritatively accomplished with a wide yet accurate vision which gives a better perspective of the subject than anything published to date. The text of the five chapters is concentrated and to the point, balanced by the wealth of art-historical analysis and comment to be found under the catalogue entries.

The first chapter covers the Pala and Nepalese Buddhist manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with

the inclusion of a single virtually undecorated seventh to eighth century Gupta precursor. These manuscripts are written on sheets of palm leaf, normally preserved unbound between wooden covers, and represent the Indian manuscript tradition prior to the use of the stitched codex which was introduced with the medieval Muslim invasions. Comparatively little of this early material survives, but the assembly of many of the significant extant manuscripts has provided the substance for an all-embracing survey. The second chapter, "Manuscript illumination during the Delhi Sultanate," covers the period up to the rise of the Mughals. Until recently most Sultanate manuscripts, being of unrecognized origin, have either been misattributed or ignored. This study goes a long way to correct this, drawing an overall picture from a skeleton of firmly assignable manuscripts. Jain and Hindu manuscripts of the period are treated in comparable detail.

The precision of the third chapter, on Mughal manuscript decoration, is not overshadowed by the fact that the subject has been covered in a number of other exhibitions and publications. The informative account concentrates on the achievements of the earlier reigns of the Mughal emperors, and it was, after all, during their first century of Indian rule that almost all the best manuscripts were produced. The

variety of manuscripts ordered from the court atelier by the emperors Akbar and Jahangir is interpreted as a product of their outstanding personalities, and of the forces at play during the consolidation of an empire. With the gradual dissipation of Mughal power from the mid-seventeenth century, the dispersal of Mughal artists and their new-found style gives rise to numerous schools of painting at sub-imperial level, dealt with in the fourth chapter on "Delhi and the Provinces". Particularly under Hindu patronage, there is a shift of emphasis away from manuscript illustration towards a taste for separate paintings, and for this reason a description of the art of the book cannot expect to be a comprehensive study of this proliferation of Indian painting schools. The last and shortest chapter is on the European influences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For manuscripts, the marriage of Indian and European motives was not entirely happy, yet some curious and lively works resulted from European patronage, and from the European aspirations of some of the more colourful Indian patrons.

The conception of this book as an exhibition catalogue belies the stature of its contents. Although denied an index, and not treated with larger black and white illustrations, it will surely find long-standing and substantial use as a reference book.

The craftsman's course

John Hope Mason

W. D. HOWARTH

Molière: A Playwright and His Audience
325pp. Cambridge University Press.
£27.50 (paperback, £7.95).
0 521 24425 0

R. C. KNIGHT

Jean Racine Four Greek Plays
Andromache — Iphigénie — Phaedra — Athaliah
223pp. Cambridge University Press.
£18.50 (paperback, £5.95).
0 521 24415 3

There was a time when Molière's plays were regarded as embodying a precise philosophical outlook. The fact that he translated Lucius, that his earliest biographer said he had studied under Gassendi, and that a number of characters in his plays, the *raisonneurs*, seemed to promote a consistent viewpoint, provided the evidence for this idea. In reaction came the idea that Molière was, from first to last, a man of the theatre, the actor and actor-manager whose principal concern was to write plays which, in theatrical terms, "worked"; they filled the auditorium and sent the audience away happy. In recent years there has been a desire to reconcile these two attitudes and W. D. Howarth's book is a study of this kind.

Molière's genius, he writes, is defined by a "unique combination of craftsmanship and philosophy", and his principal intention in the book is "to establish a parallel between Molière's universe imaginative and the world in which he himself lived and moved". The material is organized according to these aims. Discussion of the plays arising out of accounts of the theatrical and social context. Attention is paid to the Italian farces which provided Molière's training as an actor, to other popular plays of the period, and to the comedies of Plautus and Terence which may have been of influence. Theatre conditions of the time are described and the audience for the plays is analysed. An account is given of the relations between Molière and Louis XIV. Much less attention is devoted to the intellectual context, though there are discussions of *préciosité* and *honnêteté*.

The central development, in Molière's work, from farce to comedy, from Mascarille, the extrovert rogue to Scapin, the self-absorbed

imaginative, is well handled, with a good discussion of *L'Ecole des femmes*. The treatment is comprehensive, the *comédies-ballets* and *Les Fâcheuses* of Scapin not being overlooked, and the problematic nature of plays like *Georges Dandin* and *Dom Juan* being indicated clearly. But Professor Howarth's approach is less successful in dealing with Molière's most notable achievements, *Tartuffe* and *Le Misanthrope*.

What is lacking is an account of why these plays not only amused us, but also retain their capacity to disturb. Orgon and Alceste have an energy and drive which do not merely fuel the dramatic action but also stir our imagination. The fact that they are unmasked or thwarted by the end of the play does not bring about a simple restoration of the status quo. And much more has been called into question: the sanity of the central character, the affinities that exist between Molière and such contemporaries as Pascal or La Rochefoucauld offer some explanation of the unsettling effect these plays can have and this aspect of his work needs more attention than it receives here.

For Howarth the clue to Molière's success lies in the way his plays reflect "a generous concept of society" "the values of an ordered, civilized way of

life". For him Alceste's criticism of social conventions and compromises has no incisive edge, and the power of hypocrisy holds no threat. He sees the *imaginaires* as *honnêtes hommes* *mangés* who should eventually return to their senses and will leave no one seriously affected. This is a benign view of the world but an inadequate view of Molière.

The basic contention of the book is that the plays reflect the values of the *honnêtes gens* who formed a substantial part of Molière's audience. In this account the *raisonneurs* (Philinte, Cléante, Beralde, Ariste, etc.) are seen as articulating not Molière's viewpoint but that of this section of the audience. This suggestion is plausible but it remains no more than a suggestion. The analysis of the Paris audience is not sufficiently precise to provide a convincing case and other important areas of speculation — the attitudes of a playwright towards his audience, the feelings (both social and professional) of an actor towards such an audience — are left unexplored. As a result we get no clear sense of why Molière wrote as he did. The book concludes with a valuable list of the plays showing the number played by Molière and the number performances given at the court and in Paris.

For more than two centuries

Another Dreamer

It's long since I went to touch the air, to hear
The water rattle and his face not change.
I long to exchange the words he cannot know.

To visit again the pool that covers a wood
I could never find. His eyes outstare my face
In the rippling waters with murmurs of their own.

Somewhere he learnt how not to initiate — not
Quite reflect on smiles like his but how to fry
The other brow, and even the oddest mouth.

It's peace to be perplexed by his smiles and dooms
Almost in touch. The retreating shadows that drift
Up from his covers, once flew above the ear.

We cleverly read the bodily leaves
That blur the mere. But when his foreign guests
Gleam out, who then know how to compensate

I want to know who writes his rational dreams.

Alastair Fowler

following their rediscovery in 1948 Aristotle's *Poetics* has been as pervasive an influence on European writings about the theatre as his other works had on medieval philosophy and science. Aristotle's terms feature prominently in Racine's writings about his own plays and for long they also provided the framework within which these plays were considered. But these terms, and the references to the Greek tragedians which accompany them, are misleading; they belong more to the contemporary debate about the theatre than to Racine's actual practice as a dramatist. It is of course true that he observed those rules which were in part derived from Aristotle, but his practical models were not the Greek tragedians. His immediate predecessors and Seneca exercised a far stronger influence.

Nevertheless, Racine had a good knowledge of Greek and annotated copies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. The exact nature of his relation to these writers is therefore something of a problem. R. C. Knight has done much to illuminate this issue and he has now followed that work with an edition of four plays which will enable English readers to compare the Greek and French dramatists. The first, *Andromaque*, Racine's first real success, is on a Greek theme, *Iphigénie* and *Phèdre* treat subjects dealt with by Euripides, and the last play, *Athalie*, is included because of its use of a chorus. It is unfortunate that the collection does not include *La Thébaïde*, which is not otherwise available in English. For all its glaring and obvious deficiencies that play, dealing with the enmity of the sons of Oedipus, shows perhaps more vividly than any other how far away Racine was from the Greek writers in handling the same material. The omission seems to be due to two reasons: *Athalie* is a far superior play, and no one today would be interested in perusing *La Thébaïde*. But it must be said that these versions are much more suited to the study than the stage. In the study they will be of considerable value, accompanied as they are by concise introductions and useful notes. On the stage they would seem rather wooden. The translations are in a blank verse which is skilfully handled, but the vocabulary tends to be stilted, at times even archaic, considered in the light of the cruel formality of the original is not always detrimental and there are passages of eloquence and force. But overall, speaking of these versions as "translations" rather than as "adaptations" is to open up new possibilities for the theatre.

Patterson's book concludes with a succinct summary of the complex and surprising development of Stein's theatre from the revolutionary optimism of Brecht's "Lehrstück" to the bourgeois pessimism of the *Strauss's Great and Small* and *Orestia* being staged presently at the Staatstheater Kassel. This short study, though undogmatic, exploration of the socio-cultural paradoxes of Stein's theatre, is a valuable contribution to the study of the German theatre of the post-war period. The author's approach enables one to get at a glance the forty-six entries devoted to Cicero from a variety of sources, mostly Venetian, nine of which are editions of the *De officiis*, or the devoted to the jurist Bartolus de Serravalle, early law books are

Tristan's father

D. J. Shaw

C. E. PICKFORD (Editor)

Meliadus de Leannoy, 1532
484pp. Scolar Press. £60.
0 85567 563 7

Further adventures of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table are made available in this facsimile reprint of a sixteenth-century edition of *Meliadus*, one of the late medieval prose romances. Its hero is the father of the more famous Tristan and it elaborates the history of the knights of the generation before Tristan and Lancelot. The journeyings, joustings and imprisonments, of which *Meliadus* largely consists, take place in Arthurian Britain, or "Logres", whose capital is Kamelot.

In his introduction Professor C. E. Pickford explains the significance of *Meliadus* within the overall Arthurian cycle and discusses the history of the



text, though he does not say why he chose to reproduce the 1532 edition rather than the first edition of 1528 which gives a slightly better text. The book is a large folio volume printed in *lettre bâtarde*, but the quality of reproduction is not always very satisfactory.

Wiltshire to Windsor

Janet Backhouse

JENNY STRATFORD

Catalogue of the Jackson Collection
107pp. Academic Press. £9.50.
0 12 672980 8

Windsor Castle does not immediately spring to mind as a likely home for a collection of rather prosaic-looking binding fragments. The Jackson Collection, brought together during Queen Victoria's reign by a West Country clergyman, seems to have arrived there through the interest of the royal librarian, Sir Richard Holmes, rather than through any connection with royal ownership. It comprises some thirty-eight items from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, and a Reassessing manuscripts, with one further cutting from an unidentified fifteenth-century Windsor volume included for the sake of convenience.

The man who accumulated these fragments, Canon J. E. Jackson, was one of the many antiquarian-minded clergymen who made such fine contributions to local scholarship during the nineteenth century. For

most of his life he lived in or on the borders of the county of Wiltshire, and he is remembered as the joint secretary of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and as first editor of its still flourishing magazine. Jenny Stratford devotes almost half of her very attractively produced book to a short biography of him, accompanied by a full bibliography of the valuable works both published and unpublished which he left after half a century of scholarly endeavour.

The second half of the book offers detailed descriptions of the fragments themselves. These range in date from the ninth to the seventeenth century and are mostly of English origin, though the earliest, an extract from St Augustine's *City of God*, is attributable to the scriptorium of Saint Amand. Only one is of specifically Wiltshire interest. This is a pair of bifolia from a thirteenth to fourteenth century breviary of Amesbury (the retirement home of several English royal ladies) including services for the feast of Melor, the distinctive local saint. Most of the manuscripts are liturgical or theological. Mrs Stratford concentrates on the identification of the texts and on descriptions of the

considerable variety of scripts represented. Eleven of the fragments are the subjects of clear and useful reproductions.

In recent years the great artistic treasures of the royal collections have become increasingly familiar to the general public through television coverage and through the publication of catalogues. The Queen is continually generous with loans to exhibitions all over the world and her staff are unfailingly helpful. As individual scholars who need access for their personal projects, a catalogue such as the one under review, covering material which of its very nature is less likely to attract popular attention, makes a very welcome addition to our knowledge. The royal collection is not so rich in manuscript treasures as it would have been had George II and George IV not presented the libraries of their predecessors to the British Museum. None the less it does include a number of illuminated and otherwise illustrated manuscript books and fragments in addition to the famous and recently published Sobieski Hours. It is very much to be hoped that Jenny Stratford's excellent catalogue of the Jackson fragments may provide a precedent for further publications from the Windsor library.